

THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Next week's
WORKSTATION
looks closely at three
local computer shows.
Featuring:

- * Mouasher Computer Show
- * Comcent '92
- * Apple Expo '92

Arabic Windows 3.1:

Microsoft Corp. plans to Arabize Windows products

By Zaid Nasser &
Khalidoun Tabaza
Special to The Star

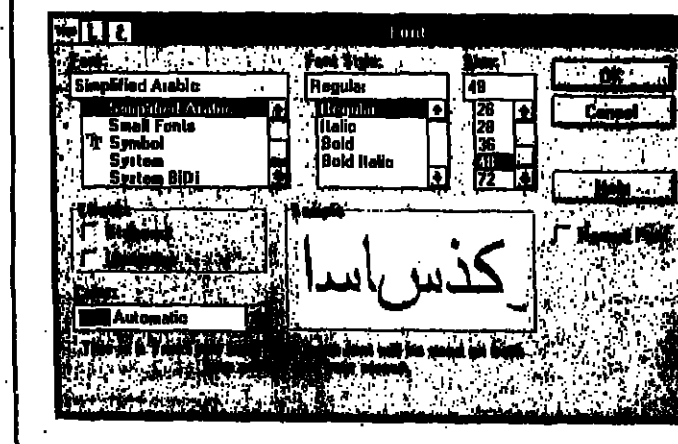
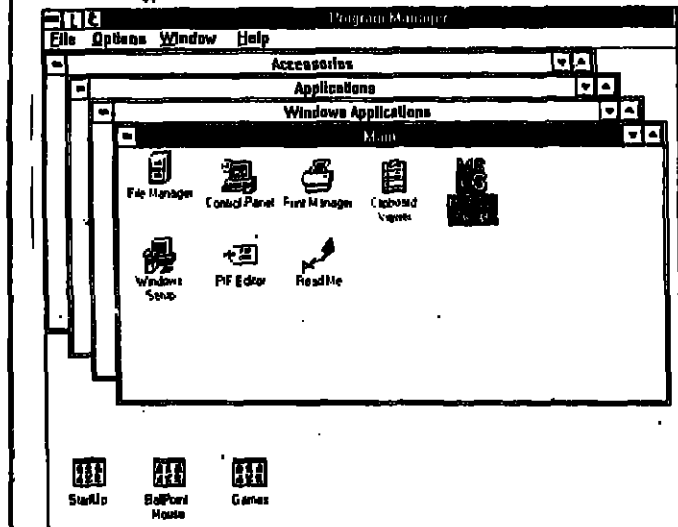
AFTER RELEASING Microsoft Windows 3.1 in English, Microsoft Corp. has announced the release of Arabic Windows 3.1 in August or September, to follow a version of Microsoft Windows 3.1 with Arabic support available by the end of June. This announcement was made by Mr Charles Allen, General Manager of Microsoft Middle East.

Arabic Windows 3.1 will be a completely Arabized version of the English format including Arabized menus and messages and other features.

According to Mr Charles Allen, Microsoft does not wish to release both Arabic Windows 3.1 with Microsoft Windows 3.1 with Arabic support at the same time on the Arab market. However, it is willing to make the latter available to those who really need to use Windows 3.1 in Arabic.

Microsoft has already fully Arabized all of its user manuals and accompanying documents with Windows 3.1 and has already included two Arabic True Type fonts in the package. This was achieved using the same technique used with the Macintosh operating System 7 in Arabic. The company plans to include another eight to ten Arabic True Type fonts developed by a third party working with Windows.

Arabic Windows 3.1 will use a new technique of protection from piracy. The program takes something similar to a finger print from the machine it is working on and then attempts to match that print every time it is operated. Microsoft intends to provide Arab developers with this new technique when used with Arabic Windows 3.1.



The user can choose Latin or Arabic characters by tapping the letters in the corner of the screen L or () (above). Arabic letters enlarged before choosing fonts.

Other good news involves the official release of Arabic DOS 5.0 which will not be protected by Dongle like the previously released Arabic DOS 3.3 which

was not very popular. DOS 5.0 and Windows 3.1 are separately functional products since users will not need to run A DOS 5.0 in order to run Arabic Windows 3.1. Users with Arabic Windows 3.1 should be able to open up several windows through which different operating systems of Arabization can be run such as "DOS 5.0", "Nafitha" and "Al-Musad Al-Arabi".

As for Microsoft's plans for the Arab market, Mr Allen explained Microsoft's policy of including Arabic Windows as part of its whole Windows project. Microsoft intends to release versions of Windows 32-bit and Windows NT (New Technology) in Arabic. In other words, Arabic systems will develop with the development of Windows' systems and others when released into the international market in English.

We can look forward to seeing Arabic versions of Microsoft's Word and Excel for Windows, but certainly not before next year.

Computer exhibitions this week

Mouasher Computer Show

● The Scientific and Medical Supplies Co. is holding a computer exhibition at the Amman Marriott Hotel from Thursday 14 May until Saturday 16 May. The show will include all the latest in Hewlett Packard hardware and varied software applications.

Comcent '92

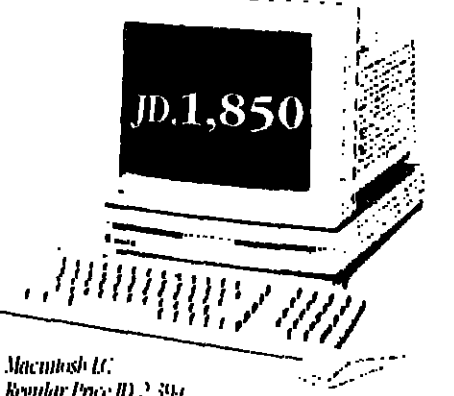
● Comcent Trading and Contracting Co. will be holding a special computer exhibition to mark 20 years of service in the Jordanian computer sector. It will be held in the Jordan Intercontinental Hotel as of Tuesday 19 May. The Comcent '92 exhibition will include products from Mite International Corp., Clizian Europe LTD, Wang Laboratories Inc., Calcomp, Saitar, ProLab Technology Co. and Canon Image Management Systems.

Attention ... Students, Teachers
and Faculty members

This much,

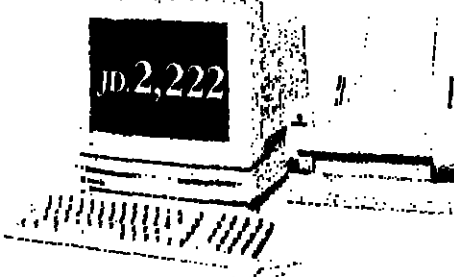
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The Star

Jordan's political, economic
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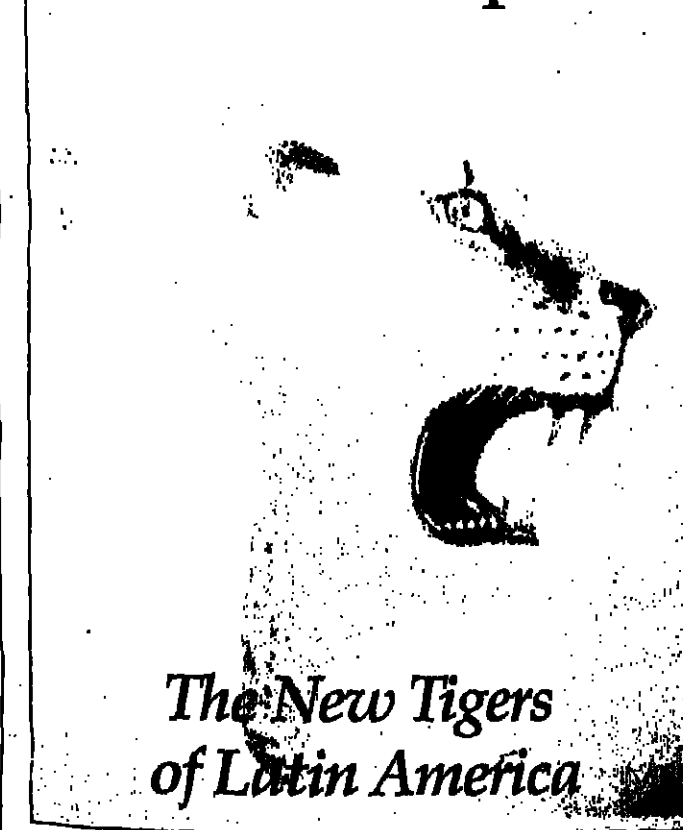
Welcome Drink

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GRAND

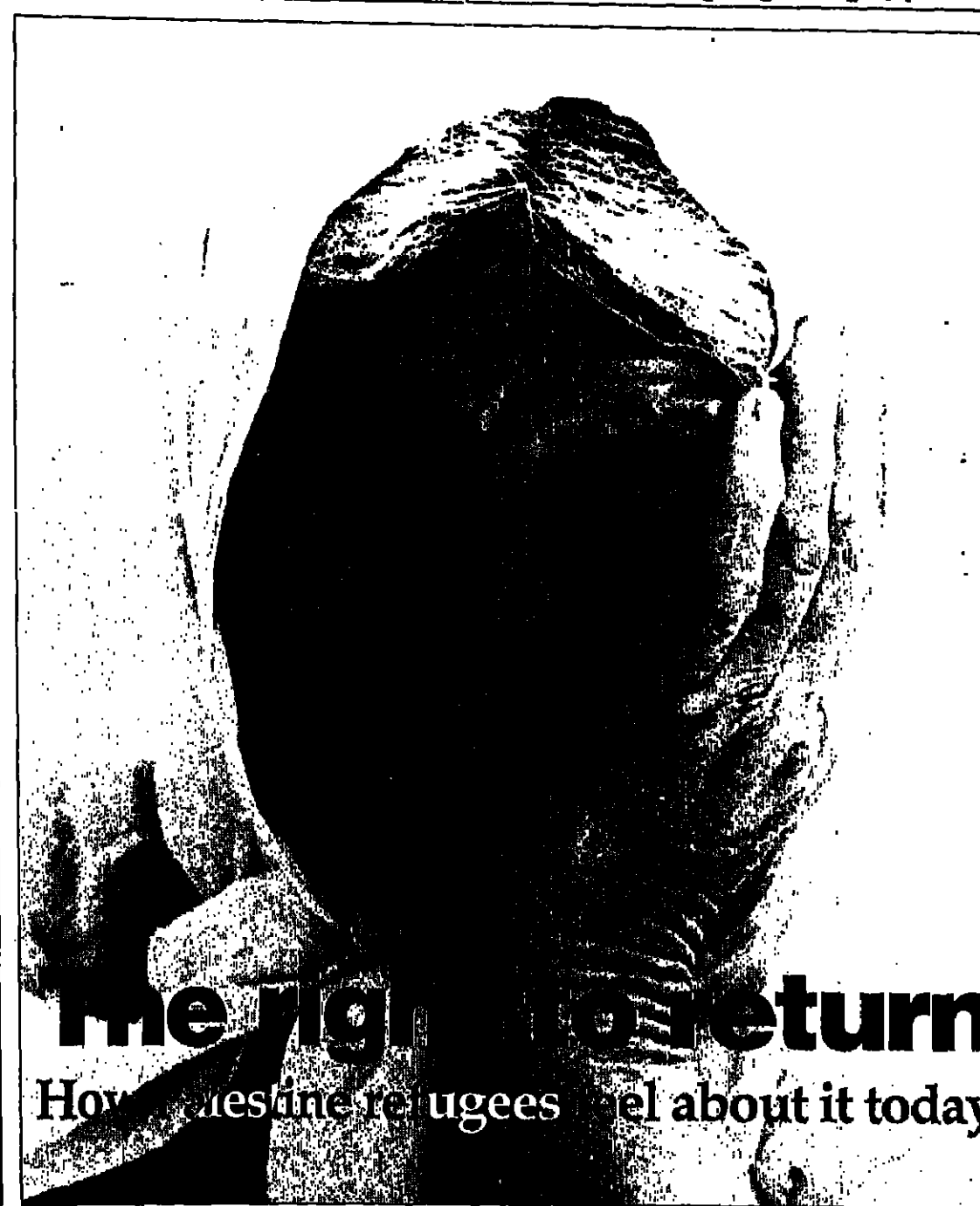
اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة



The World Paper



The New Tigers
of Latin America



The right to return
How headline refugees feel about it today

Le Jourdain
Section française du Star

Pages 15 & 16

In this week's

THE STAR'S
WORKSTATION
X NO

Super intro to
computer expos
Guide to
computer expos
Information
future

Upon the Occasion of
INDEPENDENCE DAY



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JORDAN

WEEK

An unconventional report on
Jordanian news and views

Time to regulate those satellite dishes

The Ministry of Finance is out to get tens of Jordanians who recently installed satellite reception dishes through local dealers. The ministry gave owners until mid June "to settle their status" with the Customs Dept. "and other concerned authorities."

This means that owners will have to pay duty on their satellite systems, most of which were sold and installed by freelance merchants. A fully computerized satellite system sells for an average of JD 4000, no questions asked. Lack of special regulations and laws presented some Jordanians with the opportunity to import complete systems, or important components, as computers or computer parts and pay low or no duty in some cases.

The Ministry of Information and the Telecommunications Corp. have been discussing the best way to license and regulate satellite dishes, which were banned for security reasons until a few months ago. But when the military lifted its ban, individuals with connections began importing the systems. The delay in issuing a regulation to organize the ownership, operation and use of satellite dishes in Jordan, was due mainly to inter-governmental scuffle over which department has direct authority and responsibility on the matter. The Telecommunications Corp. says it must license the systems for obvious reasons. But the Information Ministry says Jordan Television must be involved since satellite dishes receive television signals. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance was screaming that in the absence of a specialized regulation the Treasury is being de-

prived of customs duty money.

Finally, it was agreed that the Telecommunications Corp. will be responsible for approving the systems from the technical side, while JTV will charge fees for using the system. JTV says that satellite owners will have to pay a subscription fee for tapping into Cable News Network (CNN) with which JTV has a marketing agreement for Jordan.

Owners, who thought their troubles were over after they had paid thousands of dinars for installation, will now pay duty, an annual license fee and a monthly subscription fee for tuning to certain channels to keep their dishes intact.

But that is not all. JTV now plans to offer CNN and other channels at a relatively low monthly fee to any one who owns a television set and has a regular receiving antenna. Fees will run for JD 10 to JD 15 monthly per channel. Subscribers will have a special decoder device attached to their antennas. The service is to begin in June or early July.

Satellite dishes in Jordan can not tune to all satellites beaming to Europe. The East Mediterranean region is out of range for a number of commercial satellites which limits the number of channels available to dish owners.

A satellite dish substitute, which is also available in Jordan, is a special decoder device which allows one to receive between two to three channels including CNN and US Army service. The decoder is easy to hide since it hooks on to regular antennas and is unlikely to be noticed by Customs Duty officials or the Telecommunications Corp. inspectors. Decoders are now selling for JD 2000.

But something good may come out of recent regulations after all. Now that satellite dishes can be

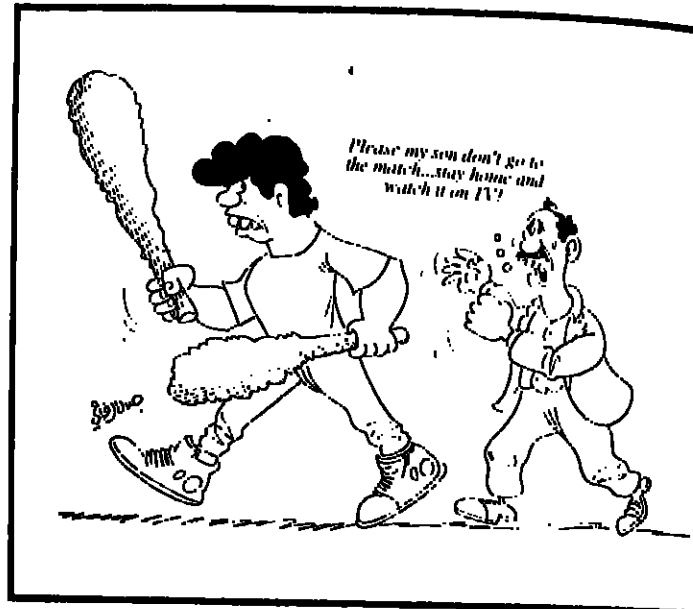
legally imported into the country, competition will bring their prices down to acceptable levels, an average of JD2000 per system.

Race to restore the Dome intensifies

The dust hasn't settled yet over the row to restore the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem. Ignoring Jordan's announcement that it will bear the cost of the project (see Jordan Week 14 May), Saudi Arabia's King Fahd announced last week that he will not only undertake the cost of restoring the Dome of the Rock, estimated at about \$10 million, but will also bankroll other projects to renovate Al Aqsa and Omar mosques and other Muslim shrines in the Holy City.

Egypt's President Mubarak wasted little time in congratulating King Fahd on his initiative and offered to send a team of Egyptian architects to Jerusalem to oversee the execution of the project. Jordan was so upset by this development that Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs summoned Arab envoys to Jordan and explained to them that Israel will be the only winner if this unnecessary competition continued. The Jordanian position, which is reportedly backed by the PLO, takes into consideration Jordan's legal and administrative rights over restoring Muslim shrines in Jerusalem.

Jordan's concern was heightened when Israel's mayor of occupied Jerusalem sent a message to Jordan through Awqaf offices in the Holy City stating that the responsibility of restoring Muslim shrines in "the Israeli capital" rests with Israeli authorities. Jordan is also angered by the fact that Saudi generally is being channeled through the UNESCO,



ignoring the Jordanian committee which has been in existence for more than three decades. In his meeting with Arab envoys, the Jordanian minister explained that carrying out the restoration work through an outside party will only give credence to Israeli claims over the city and will promote the proposal of internationalizing the old city. Jordan has warned against politicizing the restoration issue and said doing so will complicate matters and prove once again that instead of bringing Arabs together, Jerusalem may end up dividing them even further.

Meanwhile, Jordanians have become so emotional about their country's role in the restoration project, that they formed a popular committee to support His Majesty King Hussein's initiative to restore Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques. The committee includes Jerusalem residents and Jordanian notables on its board and is headed by Dr Bassam Al Saket.

Irbid's voters turn down the Islamists

Irbid's Reform Bloc dealt a heavy blow to its main rival, the Islamic Bloc, in the city's municipal

elections, which took place last Wednesday. The Reform Bloc headed by Sami Irshaid swept all but one of the council's 12 seats. Observers believed the Irbid elections, in which more than 23,000 registered voters participated, signalled a change in voting trends in the Kingdom, which until last week was heavily geared towards the Islamists. Irshaid won 13,880 votes, 486 more votes over his contender. Voter participation was 43 per cent of registered voters.

Al Ramtha suspended after riot

Jordan's Football Federation voted to suspend Al Ramtha Club for six months after Ramtha fans interrupted a match between their home team and Amman's Faisali at Irbid's Al Hassan Sports City on Friday. Rioters caused heavy damage to the playground facilities and riot police had to intervene to control the situation. The game was in its 64th minute when Ramtha supporters began throwing stones and empty bottles at players. Faisali was leading 2 to nil. The federation reviewed various reports on the incident before taking its decision and is expected to issue additional penalties against Al Ramtha including fines and administrative suspensions. It is the strongest action ever taken by the federation in recent years. The federation also decided to make the final score of the game 3 to nil for Al Faisali.

Money Matters

Average exchange rates in fls			
Tuesday 19/5/1992			
	Buy	Sell	
US\$	677.0	679.00	
£	1236.2	1242.4	
DM	421.8	423.9	
SFR	460.1	462.4	
FRF	125.7	126.3	
YEN	521.7	524.3	
(100)			
DFL	374.7	376.6	
SKR	117.1	117.7	
LIT	56.1	56.4	
(100)			
BLF	204.5	205.5	
(10)			

Gold & Silver

	JD
Gold	7,875.00
1kg	6,600
21 ct	5,750
18 ct	
Eng. pound	55.00
8g	
Rashad:	8.450
7g	
24ct (awins)	55.50
Silver (1kg)	160.00

Deposit Rates

Buro-deposit rates:					
	US	DEM	STG	Yen	SFR
1 mo.	3.13/16	9.3/4	10.00	4.11/16	9.1/4
2 mo.	3.7/8	9.13/16	10.00	4.11/16	9.1/8
3 mo.	4.1/16	9.13/16	10.00	4.11/16	9.1/16
6 mo.	4.5/16	9.13/16	10.00	4.5/8	8.7/8
1 year	4.1/2	9.13/16	10.00	4.5/8	8.5/8
Interbank rates (Jordan):					
Savings accounts 5.75%. Call accounts 5.75%, 1 week 6%, 1 month 7%, 2 months 7.25%, 3 months 7.50%, 1 year 8%.					
Lending rate (AAA) 12%.					
Dollar:					
DMK	SFR	STG	YEN	CAN	FRF
LAST 1.596774	1.467683	1.834895	128.9497	1.194045	5.358805
Source: A					
*ment, Tel: 642701					

Right of return

Palestinian refugees still yearn for the homeland

By Kate Daniels
Star Staff Writer

FORTY-FOUR years ago following the creation of Israel, a young Palestinian family were forced to flee their home, leaving behind a small plot of land and a simple way of life. They, and hundreds of thousands of other families like them, made the first wave of what is now known as Palestinian refugees.

"When the (Israeli) army came we ran," said Um Ali, who was then 21 years old and a young wife and mother. "I left everything behind except clothes for my children and that which was on my feet and over my head."

They found refuge in Beit Ijza, a rural West Bank village where they tried to readapt to their former way of life. They remained for almost 20 years, waiting for the day they could return to their homes and properties in what had since become Israel. But in June 1967, Um Ali's family, along with thousands of others, fled again — this time across the River Jordan and into the East Bank. Their tragedy had not ended.

They settled in Baqaa refugee camp, and neither Um Ali nor her eight children saw their country again. She has no family left in Palestine, knows nothing about her property there, but she still talks about the homeland. "It's where I belong," she says, although she has no anticipation of returning. Today, there are 3 million Palestinians refugees just like her around the world.

Um Ali is now 65 and believes she belongs back in Palestine because it was her birthplace. She has memories of her land, the soil, her village and her neighbors. She feels that when she dies she has the right to be buried there. Her ties are emotional and her concern is humanitarian.

Her grandson Rami, however, has a very different perspective. Now 23 years of age, he was born in the hastily constructed Baqaa camp, and has never even visited the land of his forefathers. His ties with his homeland are no weaker than his grandmother's, but his concern is more political.

"Like many of the younger generation of Palestinians, Rami believes that the 'right of return' to the lands of pre-1948 Palestine is the very crux of the current peace process with Israel."

"This is a basic human right which Palestinians are entitled to," he said. "It is the only thing that a lasting peace can be built around. It is not only to the benefit of my people, it will benefit the whole world. It will be the achievement of peace."

Many Palestinians expressed their jubilation at the recent support of the US, Britain, France and other countries for UN resolution 194 on the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland. The Israelis described the resolution as tantamount to a declaration of war.

Jordanian delegate to the multilateral talks on refugees, Dr Jawad Al Anani, says the issue of refugees has been raised "from the humanistic to the political level." This was to the pleasure of Mr Adel Irshaid, director of Jordan's Department of Palestinian Affairs.

"The political argument behind

tion and its implementation," says Mr Irshaid.

But Israel refused to make such a move, even with the reiteration of the resolution following the war in 1967. And so the Palestinians wait indefinitely for their rights.

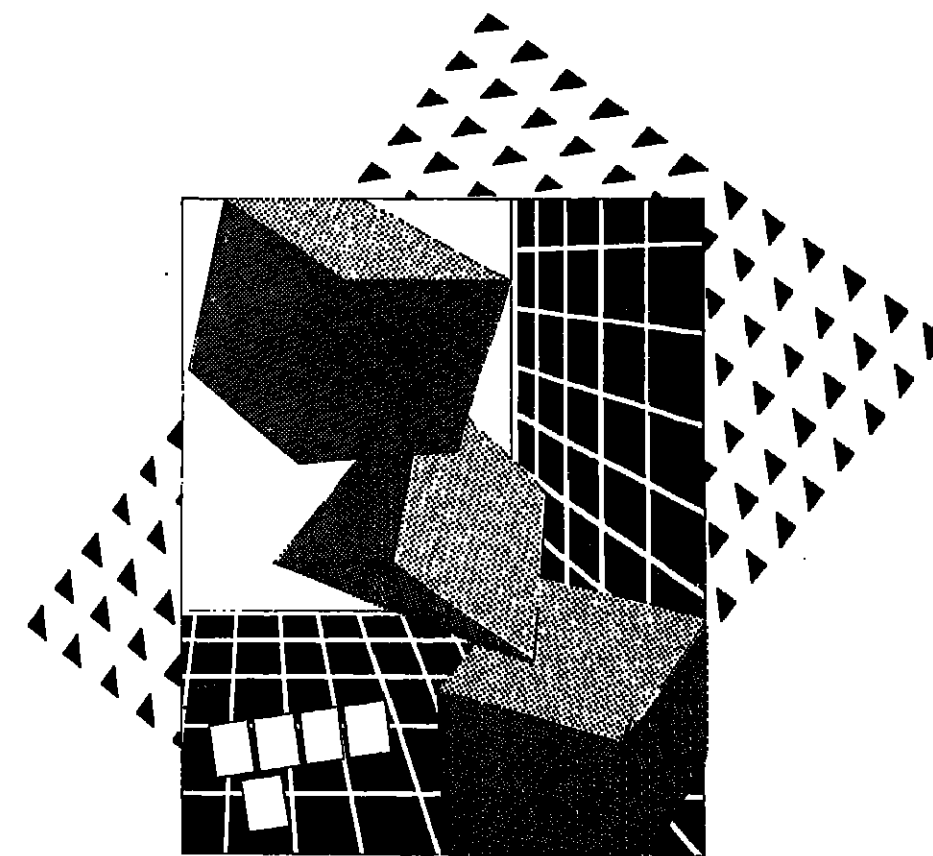
Back in Baqaa camp, Rami is musing on the possibility of going "back home." "The Israelis believe that if the refugees return, they will be a security threat," he says. "They think we intend to destroy them. They forget it's our homeland too."

Such thoughts seem less ap-

parent among the older generation. Um Ali speaks of longing to return to her village where people lived as "one big family."

"Life is difficult here in Jordan," she says, "we just work to eat and stay alive. We (the Jews and Arabs) should all live side by side like we did before the war."

Rami is less idealistic: "The old people build their opinions on religion," he says, "but the youth are more politicized. The old folk think that peace is in God's hands, but the reality is that the right of return is the only condition for peace." ■



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EIB continues to support Sahab Industrial estate

By Pam Dougherty
Special to The Star

THE JORDAN Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC) Sahab estate "is a real success" in the view of Mr Alain Prate, vice-president of the Luxembourg-based European Investment Bank (EIB), which has been a major financial supporter of the JIEC.

Mr Prate, together with the Director of the EIB's Mediterranean Department Mr Petro Pettovich and the department's senior loan officer Patrick Walsh, was in Amman last week for the signing of a loan agreement of ECU 3

million (JD 2.58 million) between the EIB and the JIEC. The loan will help to finance a third expansion program at Sahab, and follows previous EIB loans of ECU 8 million in 1979-81 and ECU 6.5 million in 1986.

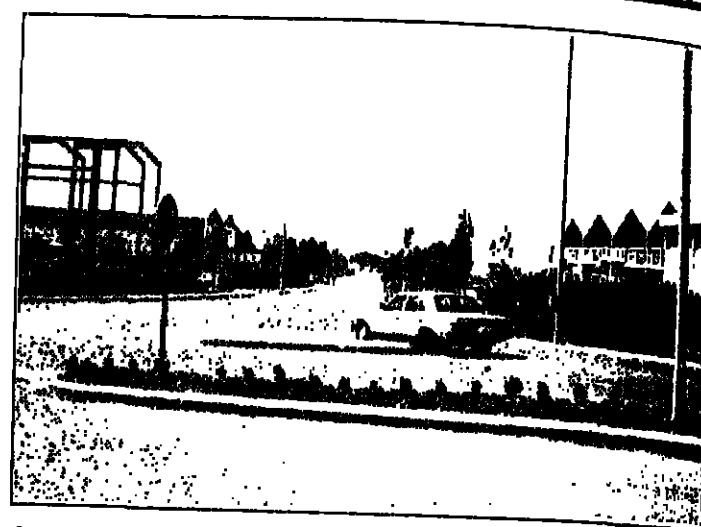
Contracts for the expansion work, which includes the development of 68 hectares, construction of 22,000 sq.m. of industrial buildings and infrastructure work, including expansion of the waste water treatment plant, have already been awarded to local companies.

Mr Walsh noted that the Sahab estate now employs 6,000-7,000

workers, around 10 per cent of Jordan's industrial workforce. Around 25 per cent of its plants have relocated from less suitable sites in Amman and at least 60 of its 240 operating plants are substantial exporters.

He says the EIB believes the Sahab estate, the only one of its kind in the Mashrek region, could be a model for neighboring countries. Industrial estates in Europe have received substantial EIB support over the past 20 years and have proven very successful.

Sahab is certainly emerging as a model in Jordan. The JIEC's second estate is now under construction in Irbid and the government has identified another half dozen possible sites for "mini Sahab's" in other parts of Jordan.



Sahab: The only one of its kind in the Mashrek region

Mr Prate is the most senior member of the EIB to have visited Jordan and he was well pleased with what he saw. Cooperation between the EIB and Jordan has produced "good results," he says. It has included a total of ECU 118 million in loans which have gone mainly to industry, agriculture and infrastructure development.

During their visit the EIB representatives held discussions with Jordanian officials on the allocation of funds under the ECU 126 million, fourth EC-Jordan Financial protocol covering 1992-96, for which the bank will provide ECU 80 million in loans.

According to Mr Pettovich, the two sides have now identified approximately where the loans will go — 40 per cent to water related activity; 20 per cent to small and medium sized industry, with the possible inclusion of tourism; 30 per cent to productive infrastructure; and 10 per cent to small-scale agricultural projects.

But he issued a warning note on the possibilities of tourist development, often considered as an easy development option, emphasizing that such development must be in keeping with the resources of the country. For example, tourists are "water hungry" and this must be considered in any plans to expand tourist numbers in a dry country such as Jordan.

But overall Mr Pettovich was positive in Jordan's prospects. "We are aware of the enormous problems Jordan is facing but we are optimistic because we think it has valuable basic resources in the form of dynamic and skilled people who are able to face these problems and to resolve them gradually," he says.

Mr Prate expressed the hope that his visit to Jordan will help accelerate implementation of the new protocol. "It should be implemented as quickly and efficiently as possible," he says.

According to Patrick Walsh, as the 4th protocol gets underway, the EIB will continue to support Jordan's own development actions. "The EIB won't solve the problems of Jordan but we can add a little oil to the wheels," he says.

Observing this year's event will be the President of FISA (Federation Nationale du Sports Automobile) Mr Max Mosely, who is visiting Jordan for the first time. Mr Mosely's visit signifies the increasing importance that has been given to the Jordan rally during the past years since it has become a candidate for inclusion into the world 14 international rallies, nine of which are held in Europe.

Jordan International Rally kicks off today

By Frida Mdanat
Special to The Star

FIFTY-TWO cars will be lined up at noon today, Thursday, at the Roman Amphitheater awaiting the starting signal for the 975 km long race of the 11th Jordan International Rally.

This year's event, the biggest of all Middle East championship rallies in terms of the number of participants, will feature 24 teams from Cyprus, Qatar, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Czechoslovakia, Ireland, Britain and Jordan.

Organized by the Royal Automobile Club (RAC) and sponsored by Silk Cut, the two-day event will include 21 special stages totaling 400 km in length. Covering mostly desert gravel tracks, the race is divided into two legs. The first leg will take the competitors from the Roman Amphitheater in downtown Amman to Rabba village in the South, going through Tunaib, Hawwara, Madaba, Swaqa, Subeihan and Abasi, and then back to the Amman Marriott Hotel.

The first car is expected to reach the hotel at about 7:30 pm on Thursday. The second leg will start on Friday from the Marriott Hotel, taking the competitors to Petra and back to the starting point late in the evening.

According to Mr Derick Ledger, RAC's director and course clerk, there will be two races within the rally. The 24 teams, comprising driving groups A and N cars, are participating in the rally as part of the Middle East Championship rally, the first round of which took place in Qatar during February. The Jordan International Rally is the second round in the Middle East Championship, to be followed by other rallies in Lebanon, Oman, and Dubai in June, October and December consecutively.

On the national front, a total of 18 group B and S cars are driving as part of the Jordan National Rally. Those cars, according to Mr Ledger, will be running separately at 15 minute intervals behind the main rally cars.

Mr Prate expressed the hope that his visit to Jordan will help accelerate implementation of the new protocol. "It should be implemented as quickly and efficiently as possible," he says.

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Desert tracks feature well in this rally

The 1990 Jordan rally, said the organizer of the event, has scored 182 points out of 200, which is considered the highest score in the Middle East.

The first round of the championship, which took place in Qatar was won by Middle East champion, Said Al Hajiri. He has now shifted to desert raids and shall not be participating in the remaining rounds of the Middle East Championship.

However, the Jordan event succeeded in attracting a host of professional rally champions from both Europe and the Middle East. Among the favorites for today's trophy, says Mr Ledger, are Dimitrios Mavropoulos, from Cyprus, Bagheera from Lebanon, Abbas Mosawi from Qatar and Mamdouh Khayyat from Saudi Arabia.

Mavropoulos, who is three times champion of Cyprus, is participating in the Jordan rally for the first time this year. He is driving a Ford Sierra Cosworth with co-driver Christodoulides who has been navigating for the past 11 years.

Bagheera, the nickname of the Lebanese Maurice Sahnawi, is a rally veteran and champion of the 1992 Lebanon Spring Rally. He has been practicing the rally routes in his Ford Sierra for the past few days with his co-driver, Najl Stephan "trying to get familiar with the desert". He worries, he told The Star, "is to keep the car running on four wheels at about 140 km per hour speed on Jordan's rough desert roads". His navigator, on the other hand, says that the desert is known to have so many short cuts, which is to the advantage of those familiar with it, referring to the competitors from the Gulf and Jordan.

Driving the car that won Mohammed Bin Sulayem the 1989 and 1990 Middle East championship is Abbas Mosawi from Qatar with co-driver Smyth, navigator for the past 20 years. In a Toyota Celica GT4 Mosawi is all ready to push his way through the whole Middle East championships.

Khayyat, who is driving a 4WD Ford Sierra, finished at a well deserved second place in the Qatar International Rally. He was the first Saudi Arabian driver to take part in the Middle East Rally and the first to compete in European ones. His partner, David Nicholson, formerly co-driver for Said Al Hajiri has a great deal of European experience and is a familiar face in Middle East rallies.

On the Jordanian side there will be eight competing teams. Among those there are two female teams. Randa Bustani is driving a Toyota Corolla GT with Maha Qalaji, and Maysa Khayyat is co-driving for Najwa Al Hassan in an Opel Mania.

Other leading Jordanian participants include Alfred Shamoun driving his Seat Ibiza with his brother Raed, Naser Bustani, Rimon Fliefel and Marwan Abu Hamad.

A complete radio network, covering all the rally routes has been set up with connection to the main press office at the Amman Marriott hotel. Another press office will be located in Petra where a regrouping point has been installed.

A total of 150 marshals will assist in the organization of the event, at the press office, service areas and regrouping points. In liaison with the Civil Defense Directorate, Royal Medical Services and the Ministry of Health, hospital rescue vehicles, doctors and helicopters have all been put on alert for the duration of the rally, in compliance with FISA regulations.

The moon is always present in these compositions and takes on different colors as one moves from one season to another. Intrigued by the concept of metamorphosis and nature's energy, Latiff says, "Every time we paint we discover music. There is always this search; my kind of art is a total involvement."

Nirmala Shannughalingam deals with the totally different subject of the harsh realities of human misery. Greatly affected by the measure of Sabra and Chatila, which took place in Lebanon in 1982, she depicts the human agony of children in a very expressive manner. She uses the photo silkscreen technique, which gives the same effect of the positive and negative in photographs.

Leaving no room for misinterpretation she writes a caption under one piece: "At the bomb shattered home, a five year old boy lies wasting away, and flies swarm around him." This is written below the scene of a crying child surrounded with human debris. The color black adds desolation to the dramatic scene. With her interest in human suffering, the artist has also done a series about Vietnam, pollution, and refugee children. "We have lived with this nightmare for far too long," she says. "I hope, as artists, we didn't stand by and walk away."

Malaysian art offers glimpse of Asian spirit

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to The Star

"A MESSAGE from Malaysia" is the title of the group exhibition currently on show at the Jordan National Gallery. A high degree of professionalism is evident on viewing the works of artists Ahmad Yusof, Ismail Latiff, Sharifah Fatimah Zubir, Nirmala Shannughalingam, and Khalil Ibrahim. Although all artists share the same nationality, each gives priority to different issues.

Ahmad Yusof is fascinated by documents, whether they be marriage certificates or school degrees. The artist says, "Our life is a documentation of something much bigger than us, and so in my art I aim to revive these rotting decaying documents and give to them renewed visual aesthetic value. They encapsulate everything of my life, an extension of myself and my family."

Thus, using the theme of documents we see lots of calligraphic-like patterns in his work. He has made several studies in this style using serene hues of pink and vermilion. Still adhering to the theme of scrolls he also experiments with more daring colors on paper.

Static movements take definite form in Sharifa Zubir's "mind-scape" acrylics on canvas. Striking green and red vibrate with curvilinear lines which take on a human dimension. It is as though the line of thought commenced by Yusof is continued by Zubir, yet in a different form.

The metaphysical is her inspiration, as "Space on earth, like that of the cosmos, should be treated as a value by itself, not merely as something to be arbitrarily filled. I relate shapes and forms in space through colors. Each color, by its very nature, is inclined to push forward or draw back, thus forming an impression of metaphysical space." Thus, for Zubir color is symbolic: Black is juxtaposed to bright yellow and is strangely translated into light. Bright red pulsates with spirit, and green with fertility.

This attraction to the metaphysical is repeated in Ismail Latiff's cosmic creations. A shower of color bursts from one point or another in his acrylic, ink, and oil on paper. The effect is aesthetically eye catching and reminiscent of glossy posters. He treats his creations as a series, calling them "Geraksaki", which means "moving energy." And true to its name, multitone dots come jutting out as if it were a huge wave that is about to burst.

The moon is always present in these compositions and takes on different colors as one moves from one season to another. Intrigued by the concept of metamorphosis and nature's energy, Latiff says, "Every time we paint we discover music. There is always this search; my kind of art is a total involvement."

Nirmala Shannughalingam deals with the totally different subject of the harsh realities of human misery. Greatly affected by the measure of Sabra and Chatila, which took place in Lebanon in 1982, she depicts the human agony of children in a very expressive manner. She uses the photo silkscreen technique, which gives the same effect of the positive and negative in photographs.

Leaving no room for misinterpretation she writes a caption under one piece: "At the bomb shattered home, a five year old boy lies wasting away, and flies swarm around him." This is written below the scene of a crying child surrounded with human debris. The color black adds desolation to the dramatic scene. With her interest in human suffering, the artist has also done a series about Vietnam, pollution, and refugee children. "We have lived with this nightmare for far too long," she says. "I hope, as artists, we didn't stand by and walk away."

On a lighter note, Khalil Ibrahim presents his "Bell" series. Tropical images of women working by the sea shore are the focal point for all of his pieces. Even his batiks reflect the Malaysian culture in a more traditional way, for the latter show scenes such as battles fought long ago. His figurative modern acrylics and oils are quite a contrast even though they still evolve around tradition Malaysian life. His people are faceless, yet their joy in their activities is indicated by the bright warm sun, and orange and gold moods of the paintings.

This exhibition runs until 7 June, and is quite an experience to see.

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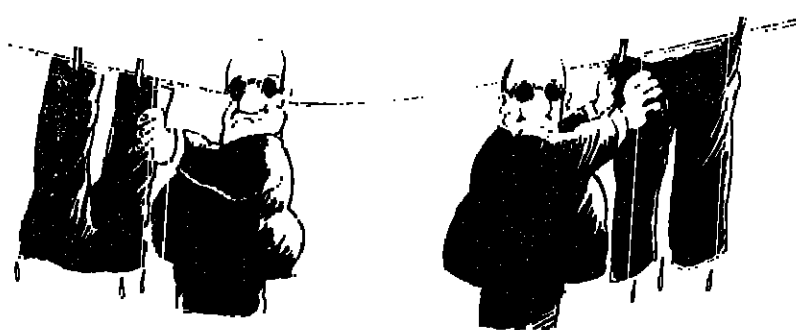
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Arab rivalries

Our Say....

The row over the Dome

THE CURRENT row over who will restore the Muslim shrines in the Holy City of Jerusalem is turning into an emotional issue for Jordanians and Palestinians alike. Saudi Arabia's insistence on backing a UNESCO project for the restoration of the Dome of the Rock Mosque sounds more like bidding at an antique auction than a genuine desire to save Jerusalem's Muslim shrines. The Saudis are deliberately ignoring the Jordanian committee which has been responsible for the project ever since it was founded in the fifties, and have thus politicized the issue and are giving credence to Israeli attempts to wash away Jerusalem's Arab and Islamic character. For this Jordanians and Palestinians are saying to the Saudis: Thanks, but no thanks.

In his letter to UNESCO general secretary this week, acting Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Mr. Thouqan Hindawi, made it clear that Jordan will insist that any restoration work of Muslim shrines in Jerusalem be carried out through official Jordanian bodies. He reminded the UN official that the Jerusalem Awqaf Directorate is legally and administratively bound to Jordan and that Jordan has managed to raise the necessary funds needed to execute the restoration work on the Dome of the Rock.

Jordan's concerns go beyond the theatrics of having the honor of saving the Dome before the Muslim Umma. Jerusalem remains under Israeli occupation and what is at stake is much more than the threatened Dome. Indeed, Jordan has been safeguarding Muslim holy places in the Old City for years in spite of its limited resources. It has never flaunted this, simply because it was and will continue to be its duty to do so. Jordan is more worried about the repercussions of Saudi Arabia's disregard for the Jordanian role, and its legal and historical rights where Jerusalem is concerned. Side-stepping Jordan in favor of UNESCO or any other body can only facilitate Israeli attempts to bury Jerusalem's Arab and Muslim identity and gives strength to those who want to divide or internationalize the city.

Jordanians are angered by the way the Saudis continue to ignore their country as part of a short-sighted policy of "punishing" countries for their position on the Gulf War. That is why both Jordanians and Palestinians rallied around His Majesty the King in his initiative to restore the Dome with Jordanian money.

It is foolish to continue to disregard Jordan's role and to forget so easily what this country, its people and its leadership have done for the cause of Arab unity and Islam during the last decades.

It is also foolish to believe that our relations with Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf countries can be manipulated through financial means. Jordan has, since its birth, been acting as a buffer between a hungry and vicious enemy and a complacent Arab world. Jordan has dealt with successive waves of Palestinian refugees, accommodated them and provided them with the opportunity to preserve and express their national identity. It has done that by itself. It has been dragged into wars for which it was ill-prepared and for which it paid dearly in terms of geography and politics. Still Jordan never hesitated when it was needed by its brothers, in Oman, the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Egypt. It is more foolish to believe that cutting aid or isolating Jordan could change these facts or alter Jordan's commitment to its values.

For a country which claims to be a leader of the Muslim world, Saudi Arabia should act as one. We would have liked wisdom and tolerance to prevail and we would have liked far-sightedness to replace myopic and rash actions. But then this is a different Saudi Arabia from that of the late King Faisal. ■

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Is the Intifada harming Palestinian children?

A generation of young Palestinians is characterized by frustration, aggression and a values turned upside-down, two Dutch doctors say.

THE INTIFADA is causing irreparable psychological harm to the children participating in it, according to two Dutch experts interviewed recently by Folia, a weekly put out by the University of Amsterdam.

Willem Scholte, 40, is a psychiatrist and a member of the executive of Doctors without Frontiers. Esther Schoonbeek, 25, practises ergotherapy, a method of healing in which patients, after observation, are directed to activities that will develop their abilities. Both have spent time working in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Scholte had expected to find that the Palestinians' problems stemmed mainly from living under the constant stress of military occupation, from poor sanitary conditions, curfews and the actions of Israeli troops. But he soon discovered other contributing factors.

"The Intifada," he says, "is carried out almost entirely by children and youths. When they are detained, they risk being interrogated by aggressive methods. This may cause nightmares and increased irritation leading quickly to anger, or its opposite, an emotional numbness resulting in apathy, inertia and an unwillingness to leave the house. Psychological problems may find expression in physical disorders. They may even cause motor disturbances or paralysis."

Turning to another phenomenon, Scholte says "The Intifada turns authority relationships upside down. Children are consid-

ered the big heroes of the Intifada. They are an excellent weapon, since soldiers may hesitate to fire at stone-throwing children. This places a greater responsibility on these children — one, however, to which they are not equal.

"Since they are considered so important and refuse to accept the authority of the occupiers, they don't accept any other authority either. Family relationships are thus completely reversed, with fathers losing their natural authority."

The psychiatrist is very concerned about what will happen when the Intifada is over and peace is established. Disturbed authority relationships in early childhood have crucial consequences, he notes explaining that children need authority to develop a system of moral standards. If there is ever peace in the Middle East, says Scholte, there will be a whole generation of young Palestinians who have grown up like this.

A project being considered by Doctors without Frontiers is aimed at women, who face their own problems. They may be married to depressed husbands who are out of work, cannot feed their families and sit at home all day long. Or they may be afraid of their children.

When a father or a son has been killed or has disappeared, there is no room for mourning. The dead or detained are seen as martyrs, who must be revered. These women's grief must thus find another outlet.

The Intifada has presented these women with another problem. The revival of fundamentalism has forced them to wear the veil again and to remain within the home. This, the doctors note, has made many women rebellious. ■

Jerusalem Post

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Armenia isn't the aggressor

To the Editor:

I WISH to comment on the letter "Stop Armenian aggression" (The Star May 14) of Mr. Ali Dincer, head of the foreign affairs committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, who accuses Armenia of waging an undeclared war on Azerbaijan over the issue of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabagh). This is a complete distortion of true facts and unacceptable to any Armenian worthy of carrying his name.

Any person, who has been following up the events in the transcaucasus in the recent past, would not have any difficulty in understanding why the Armenians took up arms to defend themselves in Artsakh despite the unimaginable hardships they knew they would face as a result of the conflict which was forced on them by the extremists in Baku.

The writer talks of "mass killing by the Armenians in the Azeri town of Khojaly on 25 February 1992." The writer, however, does not mention the massacres of Armenians in the Azeri towns of Sumgait and Baku in 1988. The Armenians of Artsakh have been living in the mountainous region for thousands of years until the region was given to Azerbaijan by Stalin in 1923. Over the past years the Armenians have asked for real autonomy and a desire for self determination.

The conflict, therefore, concerns the Armenians living in the enclave and the government of Azerbaijan. Armenia has never been a party to the conflict and the government of Armenia has stated very clearly on every occasion that any peaceful settlement reached by the leadership of Artsakh (Karabagh) and Azerbaijan would be welcome by Armenia.

What naive person would believe that a tiny country such as Armenia, which recently saw a devastating earthquake destroy half of it, a communist economy which collapsed with the demise of the Soviet Union, a country with no natural resources, would have enormous natural resources and wage war on its powerful neighbor Azerbaijan — a country that has enormous natural resources and a vast number of manpower?

Since the beginning of this century Armenians have seen enough tragedies to know that wars and killing do not solve problems but only lead to more killing and destruction. It is only through dialogue that any lasting peace can be achieved.

Armenians have shed enough blood this century and they are not keen on shedding any more unless they are forced to defend themselves against any kind of aggression by their neighbors.

Enaz Antikallan,
Amman.

May
1992

The World Paper

POUNCING ON OPPORTUNITY

TEN YEARS after Latin America plunged into its international debt crisis and entered a decade of wrenching economic reform, the continent now has the capacity to raise its head and regain its strength. Growth is occurring, inflation is falling, and optimism is high. Dazzled by the sudden improvement, investors have begun to talk about an economic miracle, and in country after country military dictatorships have been replaced by elected governments.

This is no mean achievement after the "lost years" following Mexico's announcement in 1982 that it would not be able to continue regular payments on its foreign debts, which triggered a series of defaults and debt restructurings by other countries, falling living standards, and political unrest. For years, no sensible investor would risk money in Latin America, and most people thought the continent could be written off with no loss to the world.

But still it is clear that although the reforms have transformed the continent, they are just the first step in a longer and more difficult process. Economic growth is not everything; even in the region's most successful countries it has not yet trickled down to the majority of the people. Progress must include a fairer distribution of income, and talk of a miracle that misses that essential point could merely encourage Latin America to sink back into the economic and social complacency of the past.

Venezuela offers a perfect example of what can go wrong in a so-called miracle economy. After leading the country on a spree of public spending, nationalization of basic industries and government expansion in the 1970s, ending with the fall of oil prices and a debt crisis, President Carlos Andrés Pérez returned to power in 1989 and took the other policy tack: Industry was privatized and public spending restrained. Every formal economic indicator points now to economic performance that can rightly be called miraculous.

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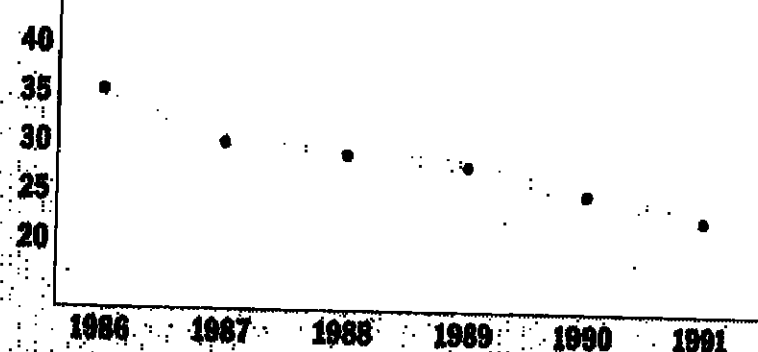
The new
tigers?

BY SERGIO SARMIENTO
in Mexico City

THE NEW TIGERS?

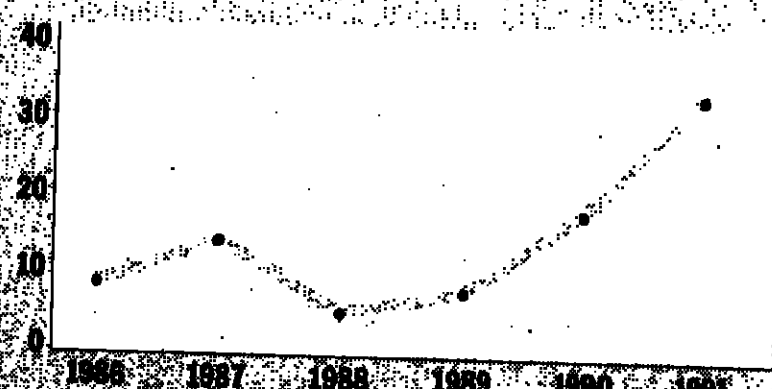
As Latin America's debt burden eases...

Interest paid on total foreign debt expressed as a percentage of annual exports of goods and services



wallets get thicker...

Net capital inflow in billions of US\$



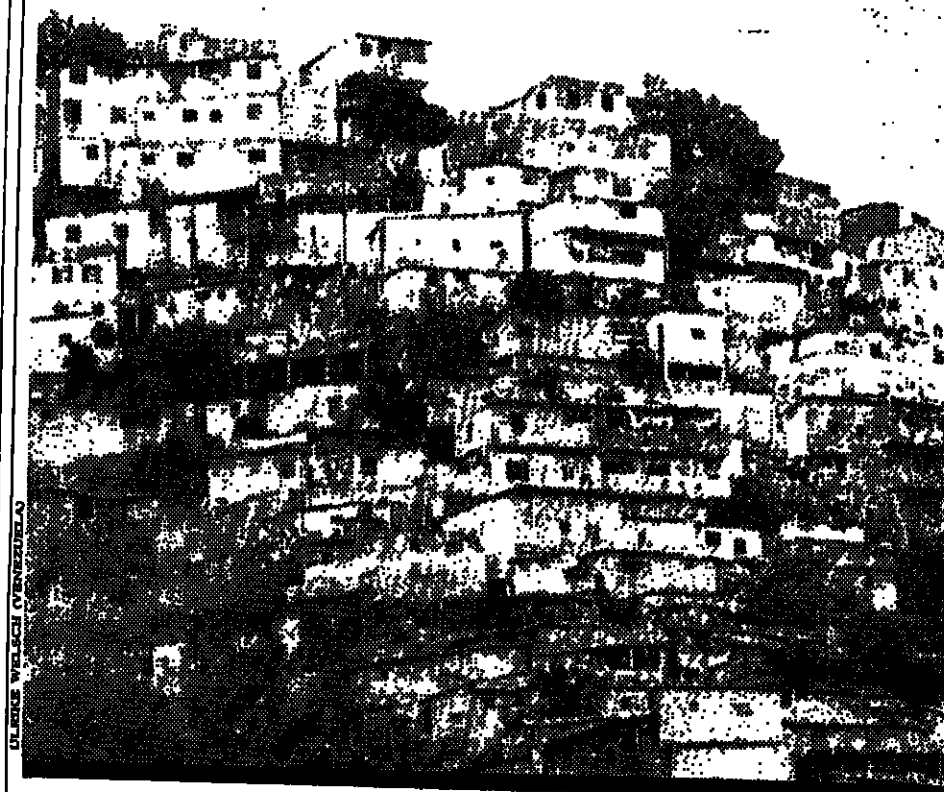
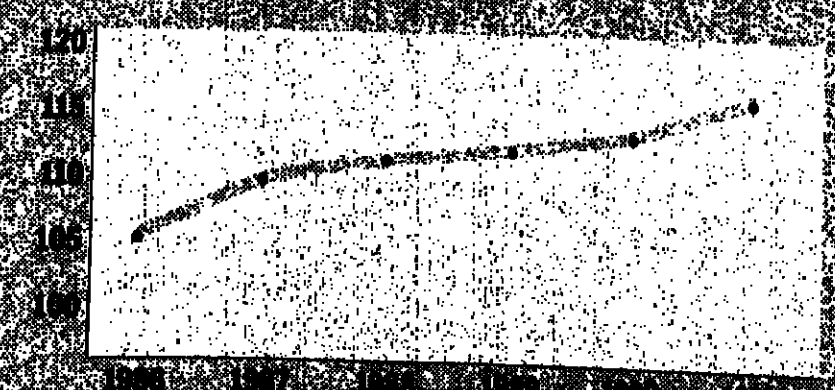
consumer prices stabilize

Percentage rate of increase in consumer prices



and economies grow

Growth of Gross Domestic Product (1986=100)



Economic reform has to reach them, too.

Continued from previous page

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which fell 8.3 percent in 1989 grew by 9.2 percent last year. Inflation dropped from 81 percent in 1989 to 38.9 percent last year. The Caracas stock market soared 447 percent (in US\$) in 1990, making it the fastest growing in the world, and rose by 35.2 percent last year. But neither young army officers nor the leaders of the underprivileged shared the celebration by investors. In February, military men attempted a coup d'état to abolish the policies that produced the rapid economic recovery, and they were supported by local demonstrators wishing to turn back the clock.

Other Latin American countries have managed to push through reform without provoking such strong social reaction—often because they had strong and even authoritarian regimes.

Chile took the path of reform in the early 1980s, long before any other country. But failed experiments with old-fashioned monetarist strategies and inflexible programs inspired by the International Monetary Fund (promoting devaluation as a cure-all) caused a dramatic fall in living standards. In 1981 alone, the GDP dropped by 14 percent. It was only the hard-line rule of General Augusto Pinochet that prevented a general revolt until relief arrived in the late 1980s when the correct economic formula was found.

Bolivia undertook reforms in the late 1980s, under the presidency of Victor Paz Estenssoro, a populist turned pragmatist, and the GDP fell. The fact that inflation had previously topped 10,000 percent helped win him popular support for change and overcome the opposition of the powerful trade unions. His policies have been largely continued by President Jaime Paz Zamora.

Brazil, Latin America's largest country, is an example of why reform may be

impossible without strong government. Fernando Collor de Mello was elected president in 1990 on a reform platform, and made plans to reduce spending and free trade and privatize industries. But as a political outsider lacking congressional support, he has been able to implement only a fraction of his program—and it is no surprise that no one is speaking of a Brazilian miracle.

After starting the debt crisis 10 years ago, Mexico dabbled unsuccessfully with traditional monetarist and IMF-sponsored devaluation programs, and then in 1987 tried a bold experiment. While restraining spending and privatizing industries—essential features in all the recovery programs—it threw open the borders to trade and froze the exchange rate. To the consternation of monetarists, it let the rate of growth in the money supply fluctuate almost without restriction while concentrating on fine-tuning interest rates to manage reserves of foreign currencies.

As might have been expected, privatization and freer trade were criticized as a sell out of national sovereignty by the traditional left, which is still strong on the continent. Conservatives criticized the abandonment of monetarist policies and the near-fixing of the exchange rate, and some predicted hyperinflation, massive devaluation, panic and social unrest.

The reality has been totally different. Inflation dropped from 159.2 percent in 1987 to 18.8 percent last year, without an accompanying recession—a first for the continent. GDP growth has been moderate but constant. Argentina, after failed experiments of its own, followed roughly the Mexican model in 1990 and got a quick and significant improvement.

However, despite the successes, the truth remains that across Latin America minimum wages range between US\$50 and \$120 a month, and some 30 percent of the population is thought to live in extreme poverty. The potential for growth undoubtedly exists, as do the problems of how to distribute new wealth in Latin America's future.

Sergio Sarmiento, editor in chief of Encyclopaedia Britannica Publishers, Inc. (Latin America), is a newspaper columnist in Mexico.

Venezuela's specter
Coups attempt haunts governmentBy DOMINGO FONTIVEROS W.
in Caracas, Venezuela

AFTER BECOMING the world's biggest oil exporting country in the 1920s, Venezuela enjoyed ever-growing prosperity for more than half a century. The Constitution made the state the sole owner of sub-soil riches, so government grew rich although taxation was low. Democracy flourished after 1958, riding on government programs for the poor: housing, health, education and agrarian reform, all paid for by oil. The middle class swelled and enjoyed a comfortable standard of modern living.

Oil accounts for 70 percent of government budget revenues and more than 80 percent of total exports while employing less than 1 percent of the work force. So when world oil prices turned down in 1982, export revenues began spiraling downwards, and public finances and the balance of foreign payments were pressed toward huge deficits. Economic growth declined and consumer inflation became a major public concern; previously, for many years inflation had been lower than in the US.

By early 1989 the financial situation had become critical. Reserves of international currencies were almost zero while imports, fueled by public sector demand, surged and exports lagged. The government deficit became unmanageable and the country could not service its foreign debts.

The newly elected government of President Carlos Andrés Pérez had to take draconian measures to rebuild confidence and restore investment and growth. The paramount objective was to set new ground rules for a market economy far different from the bureaucratic control of prices, interest rates, external trade and foreign exchange in the previous decades. The move to liberalize the economy was intended to bring it more into line with the emerging global economy, and to knock out corruption

Domingo Fontiveros W. is president of Caracas-based D&F Analytica-Macro-economic Consultants.

which had become rampant when government controls were at their height.

It was a dramatic change for a country accustomed to populism, subsidies and state protection. Thus it was daring and risky, made feasible in many respects only by the political support of the international community, led by the US government, and by the heavy lending granted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Liberalization immediately brought inflation which had long been suppressed, and this in turn led to depression and unemployment. Widespread popular riots were the first reaction to rising gasoline prices and public transport fares at the outset of the new government in 1989. Curfew and military deployment were needed to restore law and order. However, Andrés Pérez continued reforms, declaring that prosperity was around the corner. The people trusted him and peace returned.

Three years later, results are mixed. Corruption cases dating back to the previous regime are still pending. Cumulative inflation has been over 200 percent. Real wages have dropped considerably and the middle class has been severely hit. Growth was at 9 percent in 1991, but Gross National Product per person is still way below 1988 levels. International reserves are high, but social hardship had been so severe that many doubted the government could hold to its policies.

Then came February 4 when 10 percent of the armed forces rebelled and tried to overthrow the government. The biggest cities in the country (Caracas, Maracaibo, Valencia and Maracay) were under the control of insurgents for several hours. The authorities overcame the uprising, but surprisingly found little or no active support among the people. In fact, the most visible rebel leader, a lieutenant colonel, overnight became a sort of folk hero after a 30-second appearance on TV to surrender his forces and ask comrades in the rebellion to do the same.

The political aftermath of the attempted coup has driven Andrés Pérez to change cabinet ministers, share power

At left: Caracas rooftops—hoping for good news?

with the main opposition party, and support the convening of a Constitutional Assembly to provide for the democratic expression of popular dissent. Prices for key consumer items, including gasoline, have been frozen, and a mandatory minimum wage hike of 40 percent is to compensate for past inflation. The government has so far kept economic cabinet posts in the hands of reform-minded technocrats, but it continues to be under tremendous pressure to stabilize the exchange rate, bring down inflation and increase direct help to the poor areas.

For business concerns, the latest moves raise questions about whether the government intends to reverse the rules for the market economy, and even about whether it is likely to finish its constitutional term. Although optimism remains basically strong, domestic and foreign capital has adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Nevertheless, psychological reaction has been abrupt: the Caracas stock exchange has dropped about 20 percent and the exchange rate 10 percent in less than a month. Inflows of foreign capital to finance privatization of several public electric companies are dubious now that the government has frozen electricity prices. The budget deficit, initially reckoned at 1 percent of Gross Domestic Product, may well double as a result of recent policy changes.

On top of all this, there is the prospect of lower-than-expected world oil prices. It all resembles "boom to bust" and pessimism could make matters worse. But is there light at the end of the tunnel? Certainly, if the authorities and other leaders tackle the problems at their roots.

First, the problems do not arise from the change toward a market economy. It is the macroeconomic policy of the government that has produced less growth and more inflation than needed, basically because public spending has been misdirected and mismanaged. Second, social programs must be designed to help the poor engage in productive activities rather than to provide transient relief, which easily can be understood as politicking. Third, suspects in corruption cases must be prosecuted and sentences imposed with no chance of political interference. Last but not least, the population must be given the opportunity to express dissent by voting to put new faces and voices in the legislatures, thus refreshing the political process.

By political and judicial reform and judicious management, the government can provide a solid base for a freer economy, offering opportunity to all and penalizing inefficiency, and can punish crime and robbery whenever they are proved. If made in time, policy adjustments will not only save democracy but also drive Venezuela into the new century with renewed economic strength, fully integrated into the world economy after having set its course for political and economic development in the region.

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Will Mexican miracle become a reality?

A bold break with the past leaves liberalization unfinished

BY ARTURO DAMM ARNAL
in Mexico City, Mexico

FOR MEXICO, there were only two real options for change by the end of 1988 after years of government mismanagement of the Mexican economy. The first was to restructure the mixed economy in which both government and private enterprise had roles. The second was to replace the mixed economy with a market economy. Both options contemplated privatization and deregulation of industry, but they differed in breadth, depth and permanence of the reforms.

So far, the option chosen by the government of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has been the first—restructuring a mixed economy. As long as the government maintains that sectors considered strategic (oil and basic petrochemicals, the electric industry, railroads, and mail delivery) will continue to be state monopolies, there will be no competition

Arturo Damm Arnal is head of the School of Economics of the Universidad Panamericana in Mexico City.

where there should be precisely because the sectors are strategic. Second, the privatization that is occurring is shallow since the right to own means of production is not guaranteed in Mexico; the Congress of the Union has only to pass a law defining a sector of the economy as strategic for it to become governmentalized. Finally, the enormous discretion granted to the government by the legal framework of the economy means it cannot be known what the government will or will not do—and so the permanence of privatization is not guaranteed.

This is not to deny that the restructuring of the mixed economy has been successful. The Salinas administration has been clear from the beginning that it is one of change, aiming at four main objectives: high, sustained and widespread economic growth (6 percent a year); creation of 1.5 million jobs a year; redistribution of income; and inflation of no more than 5 percent a year to restore the purchasing power of salaries.

To make the changes required to achieve those goals, the government decided that the engines of economic growth must be private investment in

manufacturing exports, public investment in infrastructure, and expansion of the internal market. But the important question was how to make those engines of growth efficient agents of economic recovery. The answer was clear: the economy must be liberalized through privatization and deregulation; in terms of non-oil manufacturing exports, we need lower costs, better quality and better service, and freer trade with our main trading partners; government investment should be supplementary and interim, and never a substitute for private activities; and lastly, inflation must be eradicated.

Undoubtedly, the government has implemented these measures, in many cases with great success. More than 300 government enterprises have been discontinued during the past three years, and important sectors of the economy have been deregulated, such as insurance, domestic trade and others. As a result of freer trade, starting in 1983, Mexican corporations have been forced to adapt in order to face their new competitors. Now the government is negotiating a free trade agreement with the US and Canada. Lastly, inflation has been reduced significantly in the past four years. Results speak for themselves.

The situation now is much more promising than four years ago. The trends are toward more growth and less inflation, as shown in the chart. We can see in 1991 a deceleration of growth and a reduction in inflation. This could be considered a desirable combination to avoid the overheating of the economy which started in 1990. This correction is expected to last through 1992. The present situation is growth with inflation but the economy is in transition from stagflation, inherited from the former government, to growth with stability that should be reached in 1994. There should be by then sustained growth of 6 percent a year with a rate of inflation below 5 percent.

In general terms, the Mexican economy is on the right track, but it has not yet attained growth with stability. And the standard of living, which is the definitive measure of recovery, has not so far been affected by the favorable macro-economic results. Poverty afflicts 40 million people, or half the population, and 17 million live in extreme poverty. Of the economically active population, 56 percent receive around two minimum salaries (a bit less than \$8 a day), which is not enough to raise in a significant way the standard of living of a typical Mexican family.

Today, the Mexican economy, with less government intervention and fewer government corporations, is still a mixed economy—restructured but mixed after all. Much remains to be done to create conditions in which it can achieve its full potential and the poor can produce more, produce better, and become more competitive in the market. Mexico must replace the mixed economy with a market economy (together with a social policy aimed at eliminating the causes of poverty). This means free market prices; monetary stability; private ownership of all means of production; free access to all sectors of the economy; and, most importantly, a legal framework which will eliminate the discretion of the government to ensure that deregulation and privatization will be permanent.

In fairness, we must recognize how much has been done to improve the Mexican economy during the first three years of the Salinas government. Nevertheless, it remains imperative for the government to limit legally its participation in the economy to what is its real province: guaranteeing freedom and property rights in an environment governed by the rule of law; promoting human rights and the dignity of the individual in economic activities; and intervening in a subsidiary role only in excep-

On the right track

Mexico foresees growth with lower inflation

	GROWTH		INFLATION	
	Projected	Real	Projected	Real
1988	—	1.4%	—	51.7%
1989	1.5	3.1	18.0	19.7
1990	3.5	4.4	15.3	29.9
1991	2.7	3.6	14.0	18.8
1992	4.0	—	9.7	—

SOURCE: BANCO DE MEXICO, LATEST PRESENTATION OF THE REPUBLIC

tional situations in which corporations, either fledgling or weakened by the circumstances, are unable to reach a necessary objective.

Whenever government participation exceeds such limits, it borders on illegitimacy, distorting the market process and minimizing the possibilities of full development of the potential of the economy. This still happens in the Mexican mixed economy in which the government is considered the director of national development—the planner, conductor and coordinator of economic activity—and the holder of monopolies in strategic activities. These activities are clearly rooted in socialism, and show that Salinas is responding pragmatically to liberalism rather than practicing a liberalism of principles. Social liberalism—as defined by Salinas himself—has (setting aside its inherent contradiction in terms) a socialist content which limits the possibilities of its liberal content. Its concrete expression is the mixed economy, restructured, but still mixed, with all its contradictory character.

Until Mexico has a market economy, the recovery toward stability will be incomplete. We have an ethical obligation to finish it, and that is our challenge for the next three years.

THE NEW TIGERS?



Editors' note: At a WorldPaper meeting held in March, in Bogota, editors from six Latin American nations were asked if optimism was justified for Latin America's future and to assess the mood of their own country.

Yes, optimism is justified. Governments have realized there is a clear linkage between economic and political freedom. Most governments have adopted neoliberal ideas: fighting inflation, opening the economies, diminishing state intervention, and permitting free exchange. Public opinion is reacting favorably. This is the key to the future. In Colombia, the 50 percent increase in international services due to confidence in the future and a total reverse on capital flight are the most important events of the past year.

—Joaquín de Pombo, former director, Estrategia, Colombia

Optimism is justified because freedom is identified in my country with democracy—and democracy is the best vehicle to achieve progress and is believed to offer the best representation of all spheres of society. The attempted coup d'état in Venezuela significantly strengthens the above statement. The military rebels took it upon themselves to represent the nation's unconformity—not against democracy, but to improve the democratic system.

—Tony Bianchi, editor, The Daily Journal, Venezuela

I think we are optimistic about pluralistic democracy, but sometimes it's hard to be optimistic with all the social problems we have. Inflation is now one of our big problems, and I don't know how we are going to solve it. The IMF and the World Bank press our governments to reduce the budget, for example, but politicians don't want to because they don't want to lose popularity. For the same reason, all the economic

changes that our countries need are being postponed and it is very difficult to privatize some state enterprises. With trade opening, our businessmen and workers are deeply worried about how all this change will help improve the standard of living and control inflation. The

most significant event in Costa Rica was the beginning of negotiations to establish free trade with the US (Enterprise for the Americas) and Mexico, among others. Maybe this will help us find another way to improve our economy.

—Maria-Elena Carvajal, director, Actualidad Económica, Costa Rica

Latin America is rapidly moving into active participation in trading blocs and is responding effectively to the need to be more competitive on a worldwide basis, which is triggering economic growth and social democracy. The major events of the past year in Mexico have been the increased entrepreneurial activity and productivity and the program called *Solidaridad*—a great and constant move toward a vision of reality and social democracy.

—Samuel Podolsky, general manager, The News, Mexico

Pluralistic democracy can be destroyed if we don't find a way out of our debt problems. It seems as if our money keeps flowing out of the country, and the end isn't in sight. Latin America needs to be given the opportunity to pay off its debt with less interest. If not, we will be paying interest forever, and that is not fair. In Paraguay, the most important event was confirmation from the president that he will not run for reelection. But regarding Mercosur (the trade group comprising Paraguay, Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina), everyone knows that it is important for the member-countries, but nobody is sure what will happen. The problem is that we talk about a step-by-step process, not real integration. I believe it would be much

better if we designate a specific "D-Day" for economic integration.

—Alejandro Mainero, manager of publicity, El Diario Noticias, Paraguay

Optimism over Latin America's future is warranted because the region today is undergoing a process of political democratization and making a serious attempt to modernize its economy. The most important thing is that these efforts are taking place in a context wherein the population has become aware that the former populist policies did nothing more than foster false short-term expectations. So now, in contrast to just a few years ago, Latin America is on the right track. However, optimism about the region's future may in some cases be ignoring the fact that efforts being made will come up against numerous obstacles that have their origin primarily in the extreme poverty faced by Latin America. In this sense, the efforts at modernization and democratization are doomed to failure unless they are accompanied by a process of redistribution that improves the quality of life of the poorest population.

—Augusto Alvarez Rodrich, editor in chief, Apoyo, Peru

In spite of ominous signals, like Venezuela's military uprising, I think that, yes, optimism (at least moderate optimism) is justified these days in most Latin American countries. The change of generation that brought a new focus on politics and a new constitution was the most significant event of the past year.

—Daniel Samper, WorldPaper associate editor for Latin America, Colombia

The pundits' corner

The following news about Latin America is from a World Times conference on the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement held last November in Boston.

President Salinas was a student of mine, so you can hardly expect me to disapprove of, broadly speaking, the steps that are being taken in Mexico. They seem to me very good—the liberalization of the economy, the privatization of defunct industries, which has been something very important in South America. I don't talk about privatization as though it were a great action by itself, but to the extent that it is a cover for getting away from the enormous subsidies to incompetent industries, I think it has pragmatic value. I applaud their efforts, and I hope they will continue to renegotiate the debts which unwisely were created by earlier governments and which had only a limited effect on the Mexican economy. So, what I know of President Salinas' policies, I would certainly applaud.

—John Kenneth Galbraith, Harvard University's Paul M. Warburg professor of economics emeritus

We are rethinking our past and our future because the present made us. The crisis made us. We are open and we are looking—most Mexicans—for the (North American) free trade agreement. But even if the agreement never exists, our attitude of looking forward will keep on. We know that it is through openness, through accepting and appropriating experiences from the outside world, that we can develop. We know that it is through a better economy that we can have a more solid culture. We do not want tradition if the cost is poverty.

Nationalism is what strengthens the nation, and for us strengthening the nation is having fewer poor people, having a stronger economy, letting our people flourish because they have enough economic sense to do that. Culture is not only a spiritual force; it increases if you have good economic conditions. So we are willing to make whatever changes are necessary.

—Alejandra Lajous, general manager, Channel 11

In Latin America it is frequently said that the truest accounts of life there are lies. The book that has come to define in Latin terms what to be a Latin means, is a novel, and not only a novel but a novel of magic realism called *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. I have friends in Chile who swear that the novel is completely factual and that those events took place in the village where they grew up, including 40 years worth of rain, people levitating, and other such events.

On the other extreme are newspaper articles which are supposed to tell people in the US what Latin America is all about. I remember reading those newspaper articles before I went to Latin America in 1985, and my eyes would glaze over, and the names all sounded the same to me, and the events kept repeating themselves, and I kept thinking, "Who are these people and why do they keep doing such strange things to each other?" The problem with the newspaper articles is that they give you the facts, but they do not tell the truth about life in Latin America because they provide no human context. It is very hard to understand a continent where magic and dreams and fate and luck play a much larger role than they do in the "rational" US.

—Tina Rosenberg, author of Children of Cain: Violence and the Violent in Latin America

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Capital flies—home

Latin American reforms build a nest for funds

By NIGEL ADAM
in Boston, USA

AUGUST OF THIS year marks the tenth anniversary of an event nobody wants to celebrate. The declaration by Mexico that it could no longer pay its debts triggered a series of defaults by

other Latin American countries, chiefly Brazil and Argentina. The tortuous negotiations which followed have exhausted banks and government officials, but the end may be in sight.

Just over two years ago, Mexico reached a landmark agreement with its banks under an initiative launched by US Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady. The

banks agreed to exchange their old loans for bonds issued by the Mexican government which carried a lower rate of interest. Both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank lent their support to the deal.

Now, hopes are high that similar accords can be struck with Brazil and Argentina by midsummer. Brazil is Latin America's most indebted country, owing around US\$40 billion to banks and an additional \$24 billion to government lenders around the world. While Argentina has largely got its economy on sound footing, the same cannot yet be said for Brazil. But it has just agreed to a new repayment schedule for part of

its government debt and banks are optimistic.

Governments are always aware of potential opposition to any deal which smacks of surrender to foreign influence. Western bankers, on the other hand, must be seen to be exerting pressure on debtor countries to satisfy their own depositors and shareholders.

Behind the public posturing, Latin America is privately attracting foreign capital from sources other than banks. This relatively recent phenomenon is encouraging for two reasons: it shows that corporate and individual investors have confidence in the region's improving economy but, more to the point, part of these funds represent "flight" money returning home.

Flight capital is easy to define but impossible to calculate with precision. In a recent report, the Wall Street firm of Salomon Brothers reckons that over \$200 billion of capital left Latin America during the past two decades. Other estimates put the total pool of flight money closer to \$400 billion. Because a large part of it left home illegally, the exact sums will never be known.

More recently, wealthy individuals and private companies have salted funds abroad to avoid punitive taxation or damage from soaring inflation.

Much of the money fleeing Latin America has found its way into stocks, bonds and real estate in the US and Europe. So-called offshore funds, which invest in these sectors but are not subject to the jurisdiction of the country concerned, have proved highly attractive to Latin investors keen to capture the highest return. Now they are beginning to look for those returns at home.

According to the Salomon report, private-capital flows to Latin America reached more than \$40 billion last year, compared with only \$13 billion in 1990. About 40 percent of the flows consisted of borrowing, another 35 percent took the form of direct foreign investment and privatization inflows, while 16 percent, or about \$6.5 billion, made its way into the continent's stock markets.

Mexico got by far the largest slice, at \$16 billion, followed by Brazil with nearly \$12 billion. The Mexican government itself estimates that nearly \$5.5 billion of flight capital came home last year, drawn partly by privatization programs and a booming stock exchange.

Buoyed by improving economic prospects, four of Latin America's exchanges were among the best performing in the world last year. Argentina managed a return in US dollars of almost 400 percent in 1991, while Chile and Mexico hit 100 percent returns. Brazil, which only opened its stock market to foreigners in July last year, scored over 150 percent.

Of course, flight money can always go wandering again. Despite the present euphoria, some experts are warning that even a modest setback in economic terms could move the hot money abroad again overnight. ♦

Nigel Adam, a financial and business consultant and writer, is an associate editor for *The WorldPaper*.

THE NEW TIGERS?

Latin Church in quandary

Changes bring questions

By FRANCISCO PRIETO
in Mexico City, Mexico

THE ECONOMIC crisis of the 1980s and the collapse of communism in Europe have placed the Catholic Church in Latin America at a difficult crossroads.

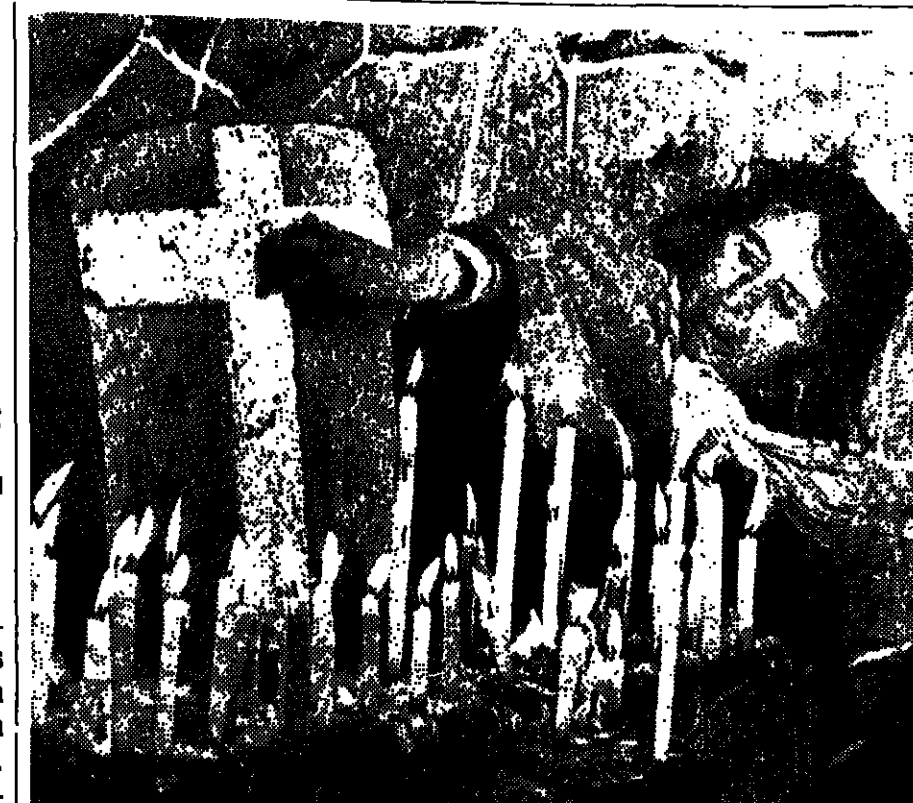
On one hand, increasing poverty encouraged the development of Liberation Theology and thus the confrontation of church and state across most of the continent. On the other hand, the narrow defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1990, the crumbling of the Marxist-inspired regimes of Eastern Europe, and the continuous democratization of most Latin American countries, at least formally, have forced a shift in church attitudes. The "Christians for socialism" movement is losing its ideological base, and when priests and their grassroots organizations can act freely, systematic confrontation with the state has lost its point.

The exceptions are Mexico and Nicaragua. In Mexico, the liberation movement is no stranger but the official church leadership has not only kept it on the sidelines, but also successfully pressured President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's administration into repealing the articles of the Constitution which, though seldom applied, deprived the clergy of civilian rights and even outlawed religious education. In Nicaragua, the clergy played a very important role in the Sandinista revolutionary movement, and when it took power two of its members occupied cabinet posts.

However, the economic crisis is still a reality in all Latin American countries. In some, like Mexico, after 10 years of hardship and unemployment, inflation is finally under control, the economy has been diversified and a degree of justice in the distribution of earnings can be seen on the horizon. In others, such as Peru, poverty has reached such high levels that it can lead only to revolt or to painful social inertia.

Most Latin American countries face the need to rebuild their economy within a policy of austerity. This neoliberalism with its emphasis on free market capitalism is repugnant to the traditional social doctrine of the Church, which stems from the gospel, and from the writings of church fathers. For them, private property should benefit the common good, and the owners are nothing

Francisco Prieto, a Mexican novelist and journalist, is a professor at the Universidad Iberoamericana de Mexico.



Will poverty force the Church's hand?

more than administrators whose rights end if they produce injustice. Against this, there is the fact that when freed from repression, the church hierarchy—naturally made conservative by the fact that it wields power—tends to cooperate with government.

Three clashing tendencies are present in every Latin American country, with the possible exception of Cuba, of which little is known. The first tendency is that of the official Church to avoid any kind of confrontation or concrete criticism of the neo-liberal policies of the current Latin American governments, but the church will not repress those Liberation Theology movements which say that the Kingdom of God must be built on Earth.

The second tendency is expressed in the view of Emilio Máspero, Vice President of Latin American Workers' Headquarters that "capitalism has planted in our region models of consumerism that are totally unrelated to the basic needs of our people," and that, "the criteria, policies and measures that the International Monetary Fund is trying to impose...constitute true assaults on the Christian concept of work, of working men, their rights, their freedom, their conquests." This tendency is in agreement with the lectures and encyclical letters of Pope John Paul II who, after seeing his native Poland freed, has experienced the horror of a Europe immersed in materialism, where day-care centers and elementary schools are closing their doors, and where bonds between men and women have become ephemeral.

This way of thinking can be found in the majority of Mexican Jesuits and Dominicans; in the leaders of the Salvadoran Church, and in the majority of the Chilean clergy.

In Mexico, the bishop of Chiapas supported this line of thought and reacted firmly recently when the state governor arrested a parish priest, charging that he had instigated a peasant uprising. The priest, in fact, had only counseled the parish peasantry on how to enforce peacefully their right to land usurped by

one command, love one another," which is the cornerstone of Christianity. These advocates support class struggle, but while the tendency is quite widespread in the Brazilian and Nicaraguan churches, it is losing support elsewhere.

Even Emilio Máspero has written: "Within the framework of this ideological confusion and contradictions, at a certain point the group known as 'Christians for socialism' emerges, but I am under the impression that it has been losing steam little by little. I remember that in their first meeting they concluded that the historic instrument for the liberation of Latin America was the pro-Soviet communist party...Nevertheless, the Christian utopia must be clearly affirmed; solidarity with the poor is mandated by our conversion to the Lord, but we exclude all violent methods and causes for hatred in our social dealings."

However, this movement might experience a rebirth if the extreme poverty affecting Latin Americans is not alleviated.

The influence of the major countries in the world and the conservatism of the diocesan clergy, who are generally close to the ruling oligarchy in their country, suggest that the second tendency, equidistant between capitalist and socialist materialism, will most influence Latin American Christians in a way we cannot predict but which will undoubtedly lead to a break with the status quo. ♦

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THE NEW TIGERS?

Love, tears, and bolero

By DANIEL SAMPER in Bogotá, Colombia

IF FREDERIC CHOPIN'S music served to keep Poland united and the Marseillaise rallied France around liberty, equality and fraternity, why couldn't music keep Latin America united?

Specifically, that music is the bolero. For more than one hundred years, the bolero has been useful, at least, for keeping Latin American males close to Latin American females. Even though it was born in the Caribbean, the bolero has been accepted as a form of musical expression by all of Latin America: by the proud Mexicans and the complex dwellers of Buenos Aires; by the loudmouthed Cubans and the silent inhabitants of the Andes; by whites and blacks, mestizos and mulattos—by all who for four or five generations have danced to and sung the bolero.

With the passport of language, the bolero has even reached Spain, where it is considered part of a common, sentimental heritage. That is to say, it is a part of a mutual cultural heritage, since the way in which people feel and relay their feelings is also an expression of their culture.

*Bésame... bésame mucho,
como si fuera esta noche la última vez.
Bésame, bésame mucho,
que tengo miedo perderte
perderte después.*

(Kiss me... kiss me a lot,
As if tonight were the last time.
Kiss me, kiss me a lot,
I am afraid of losing you,
of losing you after.)

Even though bolero designates a Spanish musical air dating from the 17th century, the only thing that the Latin American bolero shares with this musical form is its name. The old bolero inspired Beethoven, Chopin, Berlioz and Ravel, among others. Aside from fundamental musical differences (the old Spanish bolero is written in 3/4 rhythm and the Latin American one in 2/4) the present bolero descends from the black *contradanza* and the Spanish *habanera* dances. That mixed racial contribution is what makes the bolero resemble the area of the world it expresses: a region of racial and cultural syncretism.

Even though the bolero had started to take shape by the middle of the 19th century, the first of these melodies was officially composed in 1895 by the Cuban José "Pepe" Sánchez. From that distant genesis the bolero has derived in personal, torn souls, frustrated love, flowing tears, passionate nights (it was called, typically, *Trancas* (Sánchez), and already had all the words that are eternally repeated in boleros: yearning, kiss, passion, sorrow.

Daniel Samper, a Colombian journalist, is the author of the book *El Bolero*, published by the World Paper.

suffering, pain, woman...

We cannot expect much innovation from the bolero. Either we accept it as it is—tacky, teary, and sentimental—or we turn to military marches. But, once the game's afoot, one can understand why the bolero has a license to kill and die for love—and the more one enjoys it. Its effectiveness cannot be disputed; for an entire century, love has blossomed in Latin America nurtured by bolero-ed semi-darkness. A former Colombian president, Alfonso López Michelsen, once gave a description that characterizes the erotic atmosphere that surrounds the bolero: "The bolero is a dance for young marrieds who are starting to get interested in other people's spouses."

The bolero dance was already daring 50 years ago, when it seemed uncouth to show one's feeling in public. "The bolero," says historian Jaime Rico Salazar, "was the most important ritual to woo the woman of our dreams."

Even though the bolero is originally a Cuban product, it has been Latin America's music par excellence, the mild-mannered brother of salsa. There is no Spanish-speaking Latin American country where a bolero, such as "El Reloj" (The Clock), by Mexican composer Roberto Cantoral, is unknown. Nor is there a country that has not contributed an outstanding bolero composer, singer or player. From Mexico (Agustín Lara, Pedro Vargas), to Argentina (Leo Marini, Libertad Lamarque), through Puerto Rico (Rafael Hernández), Panamá (Carlos Almarán), Colombia (Jaime R. Echeverría), Ecuador (Julio Jaramillo), Chile (Lucho Gatica), Bolivia (Raúl Shaw Moreno) and even Brazil (Ary Barroso) there have been contributions to this music.

*Siempre que te pregunto
que cuándo, cómo y dónde
te siempre me respondes:
quién, cuándo, dónde...*

(Every time I ask you
when, how and where,
you always answer:
perhaps, perhaps, perhaps...)

Many intellectuals have been able to grasp the expressive value of this bolero. Nobel Prize winner Gabriel García Márquez knows dozens of boleros by heart; Mexican Carlos Monsiváis has written many satirical and profound pages on the subject; even a New Yorker of Latin origin wrote a novel that won the 1990 Pulitzer Prize, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, which is about a bolero composer. Not everyone agrees with them. Poet and novelist Álvaro Mutis confessed, "I deeply hate boleros." But he offers us an explanation of his hatred: a reason that also



Mexican composer Roberto Cantoral.

explains its success: "If cultural and economic underdevelopment needs a hymn, it ought to be a bolero." Yes, the bolero may be the hymn of underdevelopment, but a hymn at last! That is to say, a music with a defined emotional territory under which a community can be cemented together.

And the bolero is not just considered a hymn by Latin Americans—others also identify it with Latin America itself. This is why the bolero has become international without abandoning its roots. The list of artists who have included boleros in their repertory is long: Nat "King" Cole, Edith Piaf, Bing Crosby, Doris Day, Pier Angeli, Josephine Baker, Maurice Chevalier, Titta Ruffo, Enrico Caruso, Plácido Domingo, Andy Russell, Jose Carreras, Vikky Carr. Even Walt Disney himself included "Tres palabras" (three words) as the theme for the film *Musica, maestro*.

The bolero is a Latin American passion which sometimes becomes dormant. But it is always beating and returns when it was thought to have left forever. "Children are urging their parents to teach it to them," said García Márquez 10 years ago. His premonition was correct. Shortly after, the old bolero trios and singers were topping the music charts once again in Spain and several Latin American countries. In fact, most of the films of postmodern filmmaker Pedro Almodóvar honor this music that made our love-sick grandfathers sigh.

Running the risk of uttering a bolero phrase, we must admit that the bolero, as love, is eternal.

*Aquellos ojos verdes de mirada serena
dejaron en mi alma eterna sed de amar,
anhelos de caricias, de besos y ternuras
de todas las dulzuras que soblan brindar.*

(Those serene green eyes
Left in my soul an eternal thirst for love.
A yearning for caresses, kisses and
tenderness.
For all the sweetness that they once
bestowed.)

21 MAY 1992

THE STAR 15

Le Jourdain

Section française du Star

Cannes 92

Un palmarès qui couronne le cinéma classique

C'est le Danois Bille August qui reçoit la Palme d'Or pour son film "Meilleures intentions". Autre coup de cœur de la Croisette pour Robert Altman et son "Player", qui se voit récompensé pour la mise en scène et l'acteur principal.

LE JURY de Cannes 1992, que présidait l'acteur français Gérard Depardieu, a couronné, lundi, le grand cinéma classique des maîtres confirmés, avec en tête, le Danois Bille August et ses "Meilleures intentions". Il est talonné par les Américains Robert Altman et James Ivory. Certains reprocheront peut-être aux dix jurés, dont le réalisateur John Boorman et l'actrice Jamie Lee Curtis, de ne pas avoir joué le rôle de têtes chercheuses. Aucun nom nouveau, aucun jeune réalisateur (et pas un Français) dans ce palmarès du consensus.

Mais nul ne contestera la qualité et la beauté des œuvres choisies. L'accueil du Palais des festivals a d'ailleurs été plus que chaleureux, sans aucune des manifestations d'humour notées les années précédentes.

Événement historique

Le choix de Bille August a cependant étonné et constitué un événement historique puisque le Danois avait déjà reçu la Palme il y a quatre ans pour "Pelle le Conquérant". Mais ses "Meilleures intentions" ont paru à la plupart un splendide moment (trois heures en fait) de cinéma, avec en coulisses un scénariste nommé Ingmar Bergman.

Ce jeune cinéaste de 44 ans, qui n'a que cinq films derrière lui, peut sabler le champagne avec sa jeune et jolie épouse, que Cannes a préféré à la britannique Emma Thompson ("Retour à Howards end") donnée pour favorite.

Un autre coup de cœur de la Croisette, Robert Altman et son "Player", reçoivent une double récompense. D'abord pour la mise en scène mais aussi pour l'acteur principal, Tim Robbins, dont le festival a également apprécié le premier film comme



"Il ladro di bambini", film Italien, prix spécial du jury

réalisateur, "Bob Roberts".

Donné en tête des pronostics, Altman a probablement eu tort, car il ne lui a fait que les trois précédentes Palmes d'Or avaient l'accent américain et qu'un besoin d'autres cinématographies se faisait sentir.

James Ivory, lui aussi, avait enthousiasmé les festivaliers par l'ampleur et la magnificence d'"Howards end". Il reçoit un prix anniversaire qui dans le passé a été décerné aux plus grands noms. Fellini a eu le 40ème, Antonioni le 35ème, Visconti le 25ème. Ivory ne dépare pas dans la liste.

Le moins connu des cinéastes du "haut" du Palmarès est l'Italien Gianni Amelio, dont le quatrième film, "Il ladro di bambini", est empreint d'une émotion tendre. Les jurés l'ont salué avec leur prix spécial et Amelio est monté sur scène avec ses deux petits héros, Valentina Scalici et Giuseppe Ieracianno, tous deux d'un naturel confondant.

La France n'est guère présente

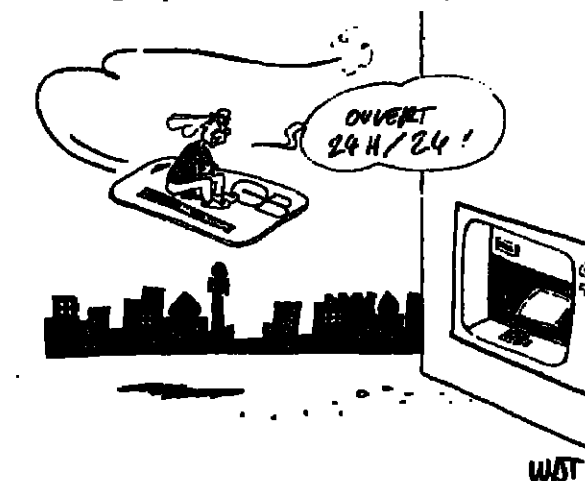
qu'au travers de coproductions: la Sept a participé aux "Meilleures intentions", et le film du Russe Vitali Kanevski a bénéficié d'une aide officielle.

Arnaud Desplechin et son énigmatique "Sentinelle", cité aussi bien pour la Palme que pour la Caméra d'Or n'apparaît nulle part. Ce dernier prix, devenu d'une grande importance puisqu'il révèle les grands noms de demain, revient à l'Américain John Turturro, également acteur. Enfin Depardieu et ses collègues ont salué un cinéma difficile et ambitieux, en couronnant aussi l'Espagnol Victor Erice, auteur d'un documentaire sur la création artistique qui ne risque pas de faire exploser le box-office, mais qui a été adoré par les cinéphiles purs et durs.

Parmi les absents de marque au Palmarès: David Lynch et son "Twin Peaks", Sidney Lumet et son "Stranger among us". Mais ces oublis n'ont étonné personne et suscité aucun regret.

(AFP)

COMPTE DE 1000 ET UNE NUITS



Télé... Jordanie... Télé... Jordanie...

FRANCE - L'Ambassadeur de France en Jordanie a déclaré mardi, lors d'une réunion du Rotary Club, que son pays appuyait "le droit du peuple palestinien à l'autodétermination pouvant conduire à l'établissement d'un Etat indépendant". Denis Bauchard a souligné "les efforts de son gouvernement pour convaincre les Etats-Unis de faire participer les Palestiniens à toutes les étapes du processus de paix". Par ailleurs, l'Ambassadeur de France a formellement nié que l'Europe ait l'intention d'accepter Israël comme membre du marché commun.

HOOLIGANS - Vingt quatre "hooligans" présumés ont été mis en détention provisoire par une Cour d'Irbid pour une durée d'une ou deux semaines. Certains sont accusés d'avoir chargé des policiers et d'avoir endommagé la cité sportive Al Hassan, vendredi dernier, lors d'un match de football entre Al Ramtha et Al Falsail. Selon des témoins, des spectateurs ont lancé des pierres contre les joueurs d'Al Falsail. Les policiers ont utilisé des gaz lacrymogènes pour disperser les supporters.

PETROLE - La Jordanie espère conclure un accord avec la firme sud-coréenne Hanbo pour explorer ses ressources en pétrole et en gaz naturel. Le Ministre de l'Energie et des ressources minières, Ali Abul Ragheb a déclaré que cette compagnie était prête à passer des accords avec Amman en vue de prospecter au Yémen et au Soudan.

ESCWA - La Commission économique et sociale des Nations Unies pour l'Asie Occidentale a conclu un accord avec le Programme de Développement des N.U. (PNUD) en vue d'appliquer des plans de développement dans les Territoires Arabes Occupés. Objectif: contribuer à une hausse du niveau de vie, conformément aux résolutions et décisions de l'ONU. Les deux parties souhaitent par ailleurs la collaboration d'autres organisations des Nations Unies dans l'élaboration de ces projets.

RESTAURATION - Après la décision du Roi Hussein d'allouer 8,25 millions de dollars pour la restauration de l'esplanade de la Mosquée Al Aqsa et du Dôme du Rocher, les Jordaniens viennent de former un comité populaire pour supporter cette initiative. Ce comité, qui comprend des résidents de Jérusalem est dirigé par Dr Bassam Al Saket.

EXPO - Le Poste d'Expansion Economique Français, organise une présentation d'automobiles des trois constructeurs hexagonaux à l'occasion de l'Exposition Internationale des Industries Mécaniques d'Amman (Inter-Ind) du 25 au 29 mai. Les modèles exposés: la Renault 19, la Renault Express, la toute nouvelle 605 Peugeot et la 405, mais aussi la Citroën ZX. Cette participation est le signe d'une tentative française de s'affirmer sur le marché des quelques 250.000 voitures jordaniennes.

A VOIR...

CINEMA - Dans le cadre de la semaine du cinéma européen au CCR, vendredi 22 mai, à 20h00, Le Petit Criminel de Jacques Dillion (1990). Un policier pris en otage par un jeune adolescent tenté de le remettre dans le droit chemin.

CINEMA II - "Après la guerre" de Jean-Loup Hubert (1989), lundi 25 mai à 20h00 au Centre culturel français. Avec Richard Bohringer.

EXPOSITION - Travaux des élèves du collège de Nazareth du mardi 26 au dimanche 31 mai au CCF.

Résurrection

Carte Visa, le retour

Après une absence très remarquée de deux ans et quelques contre-temps, la célèbre carte de crédit Visa réapparaît en Jordanie. Date du lancement définitif: juillet prochain. In Sha Allah! Dans deux ans, la Jordanie devrait compter près de 30.000 porteurs de carte

LA NOUVELLE s'est répandue dans tout le Royaume: la carte de crédit Visa fait sa rentrée sur la scène jordanienne. Un comeback très attendu mais qui, comme pour toutes les stars, s'est fait attendre. En novembre dernier, le Jourdain était en mesure de vous révéler une date: la "grande dame" qui facilite toutes vos opérations financières devait entrer en fonction dès le début du mois de janvier.

Quelques grands hôtels et commerçants ont répondu à l'appel. Mais les plans de Said Shuqom, le "monsieur carte Visa" jordanien, coordonnateur de la "Jordan Payment Services Company", ont connu quelques défailles et retards. Le lancement officiel est maintenant programmé en juillet.

Clap Visa deuxième!

C'était donc un nouveau faux départ pour la carte Visa, version jordanienne. Mais cette fois-ci sera la bonne, assure Said Shuqom. Il sait de quoi il parle. C'est lui qui était le responsable de la première apparition en Jordanie de la fameuse petite carte aux trois couleurs, en 1982. Il travaillait à cette époque pour la tristement célèbre "Petra Bank". Celle-ci a entraîné le système Visa dans sa chute. "L'expérience était loin d'être satisfaisante", affirme Said Shuqom.

Plusieurs raisons sont invoquées. Une politique de marketing trop agressive qui ne tenait pas compte des capacités financières des clients. L'absence d'un système d'information permettant de contrôler complètement le réseau très développé des abonnés. Enfin, une certaine résistance de la part de quelques banques locales qui ont boudé la carte et refusé de coopérer avec la "Petra Bank".

Les leçons de l'échec

Said Shuqom et ses associés prétendent avoir tiré les leçons de cet échec retentissant. Après la crise puis la guerre du Golfe, qui n'ont pas manqué de retarder davantage l'opération, Said Shuqom se remet au travail. En septembre 1991, il crée la JPSC. Une société privée au capital de 500.000 DJ dont les actionnaires sont cinq grandes banques jordanienues. La Cairo Amman Bank, la Housing Bank, la branche jordanienne de la Arab Banking Corporation et la Arab Jordan Investment Bank participent à hauteur de 112.500 DJ chacune.

La cinquième banque, la Jordan Investment and Finance Bank a quant à elle investi 50.000 DJ dans la JPSC. Tout semblait fin prêt pour le commencement des opérations en janvier. Mais ce n'était qu'un faux départ. Le deuxième. Les raisons de ce retard? "Rien à voir



Said Shuqom, le "monsieur carte Visa" jordanien

avec le procès des dirigeants de la Petra Bank qui a eu lieu il y a quelques semaines", déclare Said Shuqom, ancien responsable du service Visa de cette même banque. Selon lui, elles sont au nombre de deux: "A la fin de l'année 1991, nous avons attendu un certain logiciel qui devait nous être fourni par la société Visa International. Nous n'avions pas beaucoup d'informations à notre disposition le concernant. Renseignements pris, nous nous sommes aperçus que ce logiciel empêchait toute action individuelle de notre part". Il ajoute: "Techniquement, c'est évident, nous formons l'un des secteurs de Visa International. Mais, financièrement, nous tenons à une certaine indépendance".

Said Shuqom ne baisse pas les bras. Il s'est mis à chercher un nouveau logiciel. Finalement, c'est Multipack, logiciel fourni par la société française "Technico", qui hérite du marché. Deuxième raison expliquant le retard du lancement de la carte Visa en Jordanie? "Lors de la création de la JPSC, les différents membres fondateurs se sont mis d'accord sur un point important: le lancement final n'aura pas lieu tant que tous les partenaires ne seront pas acceptés par la société Visa International basée à Londres. Une démarque qui demande beaucoup de temps. Nous pensons en venir à bout en juin prochain". Dès lors, "plus

rien ne devrait faire obstacle à la mise en route du système Visa en Jordanie.

Aqaba, principal pôle d'attraction hivernal pour touristes nordiques amateurs du soleil, a bénéficié d'un traitement spécial. Dès décembre dernier, pour satisfaire une clientèle étrangère qui ne peut pas vivre sans ce laissez-passer financier, le système Visa a repris ses fonctions dans les grands hôtels. Un excellent moyen d'encourager les dépenses tout en les simplifiant. Puis vient peu à peu le tour de la capitale.

Aujourd'hui, quinze succursales des cinq banques actionnaires distribuent de l'argent liquide contre présentation de la carte Visa internationale. Les grands hôtels et certains commerçants, comme les bijouteries, ont également adopté le système. Soit environ 150 points signalés par le petit autocollant bleu-blanc-or. Mille commerçants devraient dans les sept mois à venir accepter les paiements par carte Visa.

Forte demande locale

Mais le développement du système Visa ne doit pas uniquement concerner les touristes étrangers. La JPSC doit faire face à une forte demande sur le plan local. La première année, Said Shuqom pense attirer 10.000 clients jordanienues. Après deux ans d'activité, 25 à 30.000

personnes devraient posséder l'une des trois formules de carte proposées par la JPSC. Avec des frais de souscription allant de 15 DJ par an pour une carte d'utilisation strictement locale, à 100 DJ pour une carte VIP. Prix intermédiaire: la carte internationale classique qui coûte 50 DJ par an.

A noter: ces frais seront identiques dans les cinq banques actionnaires. La compétition entre elles ne se jouera qu'au niveau des différents services rendus aux clients.

Said Shuqom est ambitieux. Son objectif principal: la carte Visa doit devenir la carte de crédit numéro un en Jordanie. Son rêve: sa société pourrait prendre la troisième place au palmarès des centres Visa de la région. Un objectif que Said Shuqom atteindra sûrement avec l'aide d'une jeune équipe composée d'une quinzaine de personnes. Sa persévérance a d'ores et déjà permis la résurrection de la carte Visa en Jordanie. Un autre miracle n'est pas impossible.

Michèle Rieux.

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L'EDITO

Cette fois... la 194

REBONDISSEMENT important dans les négociations de paix au Moyen-Orient en ce qui concerne notamment la diaspora palestinienne. La référence à la résolution 194 des Nations Unies relative aux droits des Palestiniens chassés de leurs terres depuis 1948 a constitué l'élément presque central des pourparlers multilatéraux à Ottawa.

L'importance de la réhabilitation d'une des multiples résolutions des Nations Unies réside dans le fait que ce sont les Etats-Unis, relayés par la France, qui l'ont initiée.

Acte audacieux qui a redonné aux trois millions de Palestiniens de la diaspora, sinon l'espoir, le rêve de retourner ou de réintégrer un jour leur terre conquise. Soulagement pour ces frères dont seule la Jordanie, sur 21 pays arabes, a daigné accorder le droit à la nationalité.

L'irritation des Israéliens a poussé le Département d'Etat à une petite marche arrière. Même si la question du droit au retour doit maintenant être débattue hors du cadre des négociations, le principe a été établi.

L'affirmation de l'Ambassadeur de France en Jordanie, sur le "droit du peuple palestinien à disposer d'un Etat indépendant" et les efforts de Paris pour convaincre les Etats-Unis de faire participer les Palestiniens à toutes les étapes du processus de paix constitue la suite normale de l'implication des Palestiniens de l'intérieur comme de l'extérieur, dans l'application du droit à l'autodétermination. Voie au retour.

La référence aux résolutions des Nations Unies relatives à la "Question de Palestine" devrait être le prétexte à une participation totale de l'Organisation dans le règlement du conflit du Moyen-Orient.

Maintenir et renforcer les opérations de paix à l'échelle mondiale. Tels étaient les recommandations sorties de la dernière rencontre à Washington entre Georges Bush et Boutros Ghali.

L'attitude de Tel Aviv devrait être plus sage et plus réaliste. Si chaque jour n'importe où dans le monde a le droit de retour à la Terre Sainte, comment les dirigeants israéliens osent-ils priver les Palestiniens de la diaspora de retourner au "pays natal".

Le droit au retour avec le développement régional, mais aussi l'environnement, la question des eaux et celle du désarmement forment les pierres angulaires d'un règlement juste et durable de ce conflit qui a assez duré. Il suffit seulement de la bonne volonté loin des surenchères politiciennes électorales.

AROUND TOWN



● Businessmen and computer buffs from Jordan's universities, armed forces, banks and libraries attended the Mousher Computer show, which opened last Wednesday at the Marriott Hotel.

Organized by the Computer Division of the Scientific and Medical Supplies Company (SMS), the show focussed on the products of Hewlett Packard computers, leaders in the world computer market.

Patronized by Minister of Industry and Trade, Dr Abdullah Ensoor, the opening was attended by SMS president Mr Anis Mousher, Vice President, Mr Samir Mousher, SMS Computer Division Director Mr Muhammad Shmout and Hewlett Packard Area Business Manager Mr Yves De Preville.

● Musical events seem to be in abundance in Amman, this week. The National Music Conservatory in co-operation with the American Center will present Apple Hill Chamber Players, USA at Hassan Bin Talal Auditorium of University of Jordan on Sunday, 24 May at 8:00pm.

● A piano recital with a difference. John Briggs, British pianist, well-known for his spectacular settings of his concerts, (remember his 1989 performing in Petra). Organized by the Marriott Hotel and "International Traders." The concert will be followed by a gala dinner party at the Lebanese House Restaurant in Jerash. To avoid the inconvenience of driving at night the Marriott will provide the concertgoers with a bus service. The recital will take place next Thursday, May 28th, at 8 pm.

● Ad-Dustour Arab Basketball Championship ended on Sunday, 17 May, with the team from Iraq, Al Karkh winning the championship. It was followed by Al Shura from Jordan, Al Orhodoxi from Jordan, Al Ahli from Lebanon, Al Markazi from Lebanon and Al Riyadi from Lebanon and Al Kharoum from Sudan.

The tournament was concluded with a dinner banquet given by Minister of Youth Dr Saleh Irshaidat. Those present included Eld Al Fayez, general secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Self Al Sharif, director general of Ad-Dustour newspaper, who began the evening with an opening speech, welcoming and thanking all those who attended the tournament which also marks the newspaper's silver jubilee.



LBANANI Co.

● Jabel Amman — Prince Mohammad Str., 3rd Circle
● Jabel Hussein — Frass Circle
● Downtown — Bisharat Market — Opp. Arab Bank

Congratulations!!

Graduations, appointments, engagements, weddings, newborns, promotions, special awards, excellent achievements....

Drop us a line and send a photo...we will run it free of charge in The Star's People and Events page.

● Last Friday the British Ladies of Amman held their annual May Fair in the garden of the British ambassador's residence. It was a beautiful summer day and a real occasion for a family outing. There were stalls to buy from, children's activities, donkey rides and typical English teas. Four pipers of the Jordan Armed Forces added music and color to the occasion, which was held to raise money for Jordanian charities. Due to the very generous donations of many Jordanian, British and other companies and individuals, the British Ladies managed to raise a record amount of money this year and would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed by either donations or their time to make this fair a success.



AUB president renews old school ties

By Kate Daniels
Star Staff Writer

"IT'S GOOD to be back," said Dr Frederic Herter, president of the American University of Beirut — whom I found relaxing with his wife last week by the Marriott Hotel pool.

Last in Jordan in 1989, Dr Herter was back in town to celebrate what he described as a "significant educational milestone" — the AUB's 125th anniversary. Appropriately enough, the happy event also coincided with the Jordan Alumni Club's 20th anniversary year.

Graced by the presence of Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, those attending the occasion celebrated the beginning of a new phase in the AUB's history. With Lebanon's civil disturbances over, the university is now rejuvenating — while former ties between the Jordanian alumni and their Alma Mater have once again been consolidated.

"This was the perfect opportunity to re-establish contact with the Jordanian alumni," said Dr Herter. "It was also a chance for us to express our thanks to Their Majesties for their support for the university. Interaction between the AUB and the Jordanian community shows that our fortunes are clearly entwined."

Indeed this is so. With three of the AUB's current board of trustees coming from Amman and the deputy president and the academic vice president of the university being Jordanian, over the years, the AUB has helped play a major role in the governance of Jordan.

Since the late 1930s, five of Jordan's prime ministers were educated at the AUB, as were scores of Jordanian ministers and senior civil servants. "The American University of Beirut has been an extremely important feeder institution for governments all over the Arab world," said Dr Herter.

"One of the missions of the university is to create a breed of

graduates who have solid responsibilities and are not bound by any sectarian or confessional shackles," he added. "Jordan has given us a number of very strong and powerful people; three of our most active trustees are Jordanian. Mr Ali Qhandour, Dr Kamal Shair and Mrs Laila Sharaf. We owe a tremendous amount to them and Jordan."

A professor in surgery at Columbia University, New York, Dr Herter has been president of the AUB for five years. His interest in the university goes back to the 50s, when he was invited to Beirut to participate in the 9th Middle East Medical Assembly. It was then that he became "intrigued" by the AUB.

Son of Christian Herter, Secretary of State to former US President Eisenhower, Dr Herter was keen to stress that the AUB is "not an arm of US foreign policy," although he did add that the US government "helped tremendously" during the Lebanese civil war.

"The AUB is, in origin, a missionary college that promotes an American approach to education," he said. "By this I mean that we have an open, free curriculum and that anything can and will be taught. Demand for admission to our courses is tremendous; we select about one out of every seven applicants."

Half of the student body at the university is enrolled within the faculty of arts and sciences, while other departments include the medical, agriculture, health sciences and engineering faculties, the department of education, the institute of business and banking and the nursing school. The university also boasts one of the best

hospitals in Lebanon. Dr Herter also emphasized the socio-economic role that the university plays. Beside 450 faculty members, it employs over 2,000 non-academics, making it the second largest employer in Lebanon after Middle East Airlines. "Economically, the AUB is very important to the government," he said.

According to AUB sources, after the last year and a half of relative peace the university can now look forward to brighter days. The most recent trial, however, has been the process of picking up the pieces after the bombing of College Hall.

The bombing, which occurred last November and destroyed the university's famous clock tower and the central administration and teaching building, dealt a tragic blow to the architectural legacy of one of Beirut's most distinguished institutions.

With the clock tower having toppled onto the adjacent library, the university now has two major pieces of renovation to attend to. Fundraising events have been busily organized — including the Jordanian Alumni Club's anniversary celebration — in the hope of raising the \$15 million needed to cover reconstruction costs.

Dr Herter said: "Symbolically, the bombing of College Hall has become very important to our students. We hope that by bringing AUB alumni together again we will be able to share our memories and contribute towards renovating what is probably one of the most beautiful parts of the city."

presenting a lecture titled, "Mosque and Ornamentation". The lecture will be held at the Goethe-Institut on Tuesday 26 May at 7:00pm.

Field Trips

● Friends of Archaeology will be conducting a field trip to Madaba on Friday, 30 May. Departure from the Amra Hotel parking lot at 9:00 am.

Garage Sale

● The American Woman of Amman are holding a garage sale on Friday 29 May from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at Al Hussein Society. All proceeds go to charity.

7:00pm, the American center will be presenting "One flew over the cuckoo's nest"

Exhibitions

● At the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, the Malaysian art exhibition entitled "Risalah Dari Malaysia", which was opened on 7 May, will run until 7 June.
● The Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation is exhibiting paintings by Ali Taleb and Rafe' Nashri. The exhibition, opened on Tuesday, 19 May and will continue until 18 June from Saturday to Thursday 10:00 am 5:00 pm.

Lectures

● Dr. Omar M. Amireh will be

Agenda

Films

● 4th European Film Festival Program of Events
21 May - "El Cabezota" (Spain)
22 May - "Le Petit Criminal" (France)
23 May - "Lo Zia Indego" (Italy)
24 May - "Elina Vere" (Netherlands)
At the Royal Cultural Center, 8pm
All films free of charge.
● On Thursday - 28 May at

